

The University of Chicago

LEISURE-TIME ACTIVITIES OF A
SELECTED GROUP OF
FARM WOMEN

A PART OF A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE DIVISION OF THE
BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES IN CANDIDACY FOR
THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF HOME ECONOMICS
AND HOUSEHOLD ADMINISTRATION

1935

By

LUCILE WINIFRED REYNOLDS

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THE LEISURE-TIME ACTIVITIES OF A
SELECTED GROUP OF FARM WOMEN

INTRODUCTORY

The Data on Which the Study Is Based

The data for the present study were selected from replies to questionnaires submitted by farm women from twenty-one states. The questionnaires were filled out during the five-year period beginning in April, 1927, and ending in January, 1932. They were distributed by The Farmer's Wife, a monthly magazine founded in 1906 and published by the Webb Publishing Company in St. Paul, Minnesota. The questionnaires were formulated by the editorial staff of the magazine under the direction of Bess M. Rowe, a home economics trained woman who is a member of the editorial staff. On the basis of the data in the questionnaire, supplemented by other information concerning the women, a selected number (not more than five from a state in any one year) were given public recognition at a state-wide meeting of farm families. The project of which the questionnaires were a part was known as the "Master Farm Homemaker" project, and the women who received recognition were given the title of "Master Farm Homemaker."

The plan for the project originated with Dan A. Wallace, at that time directing editor of The Farmer's Wife. It was suggested by a somewhat similar study which a group of agricultural journals had initiated a few years previous. Their undertaking was designed to give public recognition to men who had made a success of the business of farming and at the same time were considered by their neighbors to have the qualities associated with good citizens.

The questionnaire method had been used by the farm journals to secure part of their information about the nominees for the "Master Farmer" recognition and The Farmer's Wife decided to follow the same plan. One of the qualifications for the nominee for "Master Farmer" recognition was that he must have made an economic success of the business of farming. Inasmuch as this is not generally considered the major responsibility of the homemaker, this was not one of the qualifications of nominees for "Master Farm Homemaker" recognition. Instead, more attention was given to the leisure-time interests of the homemaker, the plans for the

education of the children, the health standards of the members, relationships in the family, the activities in the community.

The "Master Farm Homemaker" project was launched in the April, 1927, issue of the magazine. Miss Rowe supervised the work until September, 1929, when the author joined the editorial staff of The Farmer's Wife and took over the supervision of the project. She devoted her full time to this work until January, 1932, when the magazine declared a moratorium on the project.

The Procedure Followed in Using the Data

Approximately 2100 women from 21 states sent in questionnaires. After a rather careful scrutiny of those submitted, it was decided that the most satisfactory procedure to follow would be to use for the present study the questionnaires submitted by the women from what is known as the North Central states and, in addition, those from Tennessee, Kentucky, and West Virginia, and to reserve for a subsequent study those submitted by the women from the Carolinas, Arkansas, Texas, Oklahoma, Maryland, and Vermont.¹

Of the questionnaires returned by the women from the above-mentioned states, 1066 were found to be usable. A careful study of the facts revealed by these questionnaires suggested the feasibility of making an intensive analysis of the leisure interests and activities of a selected group of 400. Succeeding sections deal with the more objective details of the leisure behavior of this smaller group and the forms in which it has been organized.

¹It was considered desirable to have a group that was as nearly homogeneous as possible. If one is to judge from the questionnaires, living standards in the farm homes in Arkansas, the Carolinas, Oklahoma, and Texas are considerably different from those which obtain in the North Central states. Much of the farming in these states is quite different in type from that found in the North Central region. The educational level of the women in these states who filled out questionnaires was considerably lower than that of the women from the North Central states. Except for Oklahoma, the author had had no opportunity to visit the farm homes in these states, so lacked first-hand knowledge of farm home conditions. It is hoped that some other investigator who is more familiar with conditions in these states will be interested to analyze the questionnaires submitted by these women. It is believed that such a study would yield much valuable information. So few questionnaires were received from women from Vermont and Maryland that it was felt that a representative sample was lacking.

THE GROUP SELECTED FOR A STUDY
OF LEISURE-TIME ACTIVITIES

From the reports on leisure-time interests and activities of the 1066 farm women, 400 were chosen for intensive study. In making this selection certain age and educational groups were excluded in an attempt to reduce the number of variables and to secure more clear-cut groups for comparison and analysis.

No women under 35 years of age were included in the 400 chosen. This age group (117 women) was largely composed of mothers of young children, and their leisure time and activities were correspondingly limited. Although a study of the amount of leisure enjoyed by this group and the use they made of it would be an interesting problem as a stage in the life-history of most married women, it seemed desirable not to include it in this study. Here the emphasis is rather upon women's use of leisure when they have it rather than upon the limited amount that some enjoy. The second group excluded from this study was that of the 237 women aged 35 years and over who had attended high school but had not graduated. In other words, two educational groups were selected for study, those whose education had not extended beyond the eighth grade and those who had a high school education or above. If formal education affected the character of the leisure-time pursuits it should appear, it was believed, in the comparison of these two groups.

After these exclusions there remained 712 women from whom to select those for intensive study. It was decided that 400 would constitute an adequate sample. Most of the women whose questionnaires the author had been able to check through personal visits and through conferences with extension agents were aged 45 to 54 years. Also, it was women in this age group who had submitted the largest proportion of questionnaires. Hence it was decided to choose 200 women from this age group and 100 from each of the other two age groups. As the study proceeded it was found necessary to discard the questionnaires submitted by 12 women aged 45 to 54, since the data they furnished were quite incomplete. The questionnaires of 12 more women were then added to the 100 already selected from those submitted by women aged 35 to 44 years. The questionnaires of half of the women in each age group were chosen from those whose schooling had not extended beyond the eighth grade, and half from those who had graduated from high school. Thus there were 200 in each of the educational groups.

TABLE I
AGE DISTRIBUTION OF HOMEMAKERS

Age groups	Number of women	Per cent distribution	Number of women	Per cent distribution
Total.....	710	100.0	400	100.0
35 to 44 years....	277	39.0	112	28.0
45 to 54 years....	300	42.3	188	47.0
55 years and over.	133	18.7	100	25.0

TABLE II
FORMAL EDUCATION OF WOMEN STUDIED
CLASSIFIED BY AGE

Formal education	Number of women							
	Total		35 to 44 years of age		45 to 54 years of age		55 years of age and over	
	Num-ber	Per-cent	Num-ber	Per-cent	Num-ber	Per-cent	Num-ber	Per-cent
Total.....	400	100.0	112	100.0	188	100.0	100	100.0
Eighth grade or less.....	200	50.0	56	50.0	94	50.0	50	50.0
Graduated from high school.....	200 ^a	50.0	56 ^b	50.0	94 ^c	50.0	50 ^d	50.0

^aOf these 200 women, 144 had attended college and 55 of this number had graduated.

^bAll of these 56 women had attended college and 31 had graduated. One of the 31 had her M.A. degree.

^cOf these 94 women, 57 had attended college and 15 had graduated. One of the 15 had her M.A. degree.

^dOf these 50 women, 31 had attended college and 9 had graduated.

INDIVIDUAL ACTIVITIES REPORTED

General Character

For the student of leisure the interests and activities here characterized as "Individual" are of special significance. Activities carried on in a group may not in any real sense express the free choices of many of the individual members, but those enjoyed alone or that are not dependent on the presence of others presumably are an evidence of the individual's real preferences and his sense of fundamental values. From information as to the activities that he carries on by himself much may be inferred concerning the range and character of his interests. The homemaker who reports a considerable variety of activities individual in character indicates that she has not permitted her household responsibilities to absorb all of her time, nor has she allowed the leisure activities of the family group to absorb all of her spare moments.

Fifteen activities in this category were mentioned by the women with sufficient frequency to warrant a separate classification. The activities enumerated are for the most part what one would expect to find in a list submitted by farm homemakers at the end of the first quarter of the twentieth century. Many, as reading, writing letters, listening to the phonograph, and radio auditing, are indulged in to some extent by a large majority of adults, while studying, writing, and piano playing, on the other hand, probably form a part of the leisure pattern of a comparatively small group. Some of the activities reported, as sewing and needlework, are characteristic of women generally, while others, as canning and cooking (which under certain conditions may be looked upon as work activities), represent more especially the interests of homemakers, and gardening and poultry raising are limited to those homemakers who live on farms and in small villages where space is available.

Certain activities, as reading, have only recently become a part of the leisure pattern of rural people generally. Others, as sewing, needlework, and handcrafts, have been pursued by many adults and some children for centuries. These latter skills developed as outgrowths of occupational interests and gave the individuals an opportunity to express their love of color, design, and pattern, and their ability in the use of the needle, the loom, or whatever tools were needed in fashioning the article. Some of

these pursuits, as raising strawberries, walking, and special nature study, involve the expenditure of physical energy and are carried on out-of-doors, while certain others, as reading, studying, and writing, are usually thought of as mental in character and are carried on indoors. In the North Central states a number of these activities, as gardening and nature study, are indulged in chiefly during the spring and summer months, whereas needle-work and sewing figure more prominently in the winter schedule of leisure-time activities. For participation in some of these activities, as playing the violin or weaving baskets, skill is required, while for others, radio auditing for example, the only requisite is the possession of a radio. Radio auditing, listening to the phonograph, enjoying the sunset, and some types of reading are unique in that they may be enjoyed without a conscious effort on the part of the participant. All that is demanded of him is that he exercise his faculties for appreciation.

As suggested earlier, a knowledge of special conditions would help to explain why certain activities were chosen by some women and not by others. There is some evidence that the women who included studying in their leisure program considered it a means to an end. For example, those who studied child development were preparing themselves for more efficient leadership in their own community group, and some of those who were taking music lessons were equipping themselves to play for church services. On the other hand, cake-making was an end in itself. The women found satisfaction in the perfect product which resulted from skill in the manipulation of materials and the supervision of the baking process. It is interesting to note that included among the leisure pursuits which the women mentioned were some activities, such as raising chickens and canning foods, which are generally associated with their regular work program. Apparently the economic motive for pursuing these activities was no longer uppermost, but they were continued because the women enjoyed them. Other interests, such as memorizing poetry, collecting pitchers, making scrap-books, and tracing genealogy, which a few of the women mentioned, were entirely different in kind from work and thus conformed more nearly to the requirements for leisure pursuits which some students of the problem of leisure have set up.

It will be observed that all of these leisure activities have aspects that would be considered truly recreative. It is not likely that many of them were undertaken because they were merely time killing. With the exception of studying, for which it might occasionally be necessary to go to the library to use reference books, and two or three of the items included under "Other," the activities listed here could be carried on by the women in their

own home environment. Certain of these activities, as knitting, listening to the radio, and writing letters, may be pursued at odd moments and thus may be dovetailed into the work program, while some of the others, as certain types of reading, writing, and studying, require more concentration and hence are not apt to be undertaken unless a larger block of time can be set aside for them.

The Activities Considered

Gardening and reading were all but universal leisure pursuits with the women studied and listening to the radio and the phonograph were reported by practically all the women who had instruments. Slightly more than a third referred to piano or organ playing, although an instrument was found in nearly nine-tenths of the homes. Not quite half of the women mentioned sewing. It is possible that in the course of the year more women spent some leisure on needlework and handicrafts than actually reported it. These activities are seasonal in character, and since they occupied a less prominent place in their schedule than reading, for example, the women who filled out the questionnaires in the spring or summer, when out-of-door pursuits occupied most of their leisure moments, may have forgotten to include them.

Gardening, nature study, walking.--Gardening, nature study, and walking comprise the three out-of-door activities individual in character which the 400 women reported. Of these three, gardening was the most popular. It was reported by more than nine-tenths of the group and no other interest was discussed with such enthusiasm. Apparently it has developed as a by-product of a work activity, the growing of vegetables for the family table. No doubt the great majority of farm women have always devoted some leisure to the growing of flowers and shrubs, but often it has been done in rather desultory fashion and with indifferent results. In recent years interest in this activity has received a new impetus, due to the efforts of such educational agencies as the extension service and the rural press. Many of the women in the group of 400 had been leaders of the yard beautification project and some of them had had demonstration gardens.

A fourth of the women included special nature study and a fourth mentioned walking. Nature study apparently has not had a prominent place in the cultural background of rural people in the United States, so it is not to be wondered at that three-fourths of the farm women studied made no reference to it. Although they have spent their lives in the midst of Nature's glories, it is doubtless true that the great majority of farm people in this country are unable to identify the native trees, shrubs, wild flowers, and birds in their own fields and forests. They have

TABLE III
INDIVIDUAL INTERESTS AND ACTIVITIES REPORTED
CLASSIFIED BY AGE OF WOMEN

Activity	Number of women							
	Total		35 to 44 years of age		45 to 54 years of age		55 years of age and over	
	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent
Total.....	400	100.0	112	100.0	188	100.0	100	100.0
Gardening ^a	370	92.5	99	88.3	173	92.0	98	98.0
Walking.....	99	24.9	35	31.2	46	24.4	18	18.0
Special nature study.....	105	26.3	34	30.3	52	27.6	19	19.0
Reading.....	396	99.0	111	99.1	186	99.1	99	99.0
Studying.....	109	27.3	32	28.5	54	28.7	23	23.0
Writing letters..	94	23.5	18	16.0	47	24.9	29	29.0
Other writing....	46	11.5	12	10.7	20	10.6	14	14.0
Sewing ^b	190	47.5	50	44.6	83	44.1	57	57.0
Needlework ^c	123	30.8	34	30.3	56	29.7	33	33.0
Handcrafts ^d	85	21.3	22	19.6	34	18.0	29	29.0
Playing piano or organ.....	147	36.8	60	53.5	65	34.6	22	22.0
Playing other in- struments.....	22	5.5	11	9.8	9	4.8	2	2.0
Listening to phonograph....	205	51.3	51	45.5	101	53.7	53	53.0
Listening to radio.....	272	68.0	75	66.9	128	68.0	69	69.0
Other ^e	47	11.9	15	13.3	15	8.0	17	17.0

^aAs the term gardening is used here it refers to work with the flowers and shrubs and with the house lawn.

^bRefers to the construction of new garments and the remodelling of old ones and to the making of hats.

^cAs interpreted here it includes knitting, crocheting, hemstitching, embroidering, needlepoint.

^dIncludes the making of quilts and rugs, gesso work, basket weaving, renovating furniture, and the making of paper flowers.

^e"Other" includes making candy and cake, preparing canned goods, cooked foods, needlework, and handcrafts for exhibit at fairs, remodelling hats, raising chickens, providing meals and lodging for tourists, raising strawberries for market, singing, kodaking, memorizing poetry, tracing family genealogy, making scrap-books, collecting pitchers, shopping, and enjoying the sunset.

been so absorbed in wresting a living from the land that they have not devoted much time to cultivating interests of this type which appear to them to have so little utilitarian value. Miss Hoyt, who lived for six weeks in three small English agricultural villages in three sections of England and who called on every family in the villages, 120 in all, refers to the fact that the farm people there made many more comments on nature, both cultivated and wild, than did the Iowa farm people with whom she had worked.¹

It was evident that walking was not a popular leisure-time activity with most of the farm women studied. There are several possible reasons for this. In the first place, these women had no tradition of walking just for the fun it afforded. Many of them were settled on the farm before the days of automobiles and when they wished to get away for the afternoon to visit a neighbor they frequently had no alternative but to walk. Especially was this true in the spring and summer when the horses were being used on the land. When the roads are muddy or blocked with snow, walking is anything but a pleasant experience. Mud is no longer a serious obstacle to the farm families who live on improved highways. But without footpaths for pedestrians, walking on these highways is a precarious undertaking. In the second place, the extremes of temperature prevailing in the United States do not encourage this type of activity. In the intense heat of summer and the bitter cold of winter walking merely for recreation makes little appeal to most adults in this country. In England, where the climate is more equable and footpaths border most of the main-travelled roads, it is a popular exercise for young and old of both sexes. It is also true that in that country there is more of a tradition of leisure than obtains in the United States. Among the women in the group studied who did mention walking several said that during the growing season one of the things that they did frequently was to walk about the farm and look at the crops. During a "good" season, as every true farm woman knows, such an excursion may be a source of very real satisfaction.

Reading, studying, other writing.--As suggested above, reading was quite definitely a part of the leisure program of the 400 farm women. But no adequate appraisal can be made of the importance of this activity in the leisure pattern unless something is known of the time spent in reading and the character of the papers, periodicals, and books read. Fortunately the replies to the questionnaire included somewhat detailed information on the

¹Elizabeth Ellis Hoyt, Value of Family Living on Iowa Farms, Iowa Agricultural Experiment Station, Bulletin 281 (Ames, 1931), p. 235.

latter point, and an analysis has been made of the information furnished by 100 of the women. It is presented in a later section.

Of the 109 women who included studying among their leisure-time activities, four were enrolled in University extension courses,¹ a number were members of Bible study classes, and five were studying music. The program of study in which the others were engaged was carried on in connection with their activities as teachers in Sunday school or as local leaders or members of project groups supervised by extension agents.

"Other writing" included the writing of songs, plays, and pageants for presentation in Parent-Teacher Associations and extension groups, local news items for the county weekly, or articles on special subjects for the grange monthly. A few women reported that they wrote occasional articles for The Farmer's Wife or other periodical, and two of them wrote poetry.

Sewing, needlework, handicrafts.--Nearly half of the women included sewing among their leisure-time activities, although it was evident that some of them were uncertain as to whether or not it should be classified under this category. But as one of them said, "I am putting it here because I love to sew." Others who sewed probably considered it an irksome task which, like dish-washing, they performed because it was necessary, and hence they did not include it under leisure-time enterprises. Needlework (better known as fancy work), which has long been considered a lady-like way of spending leisure time, apparently was not very popular with this selected group of farm women, since it was mentioned by less than a third of them.² Thirty years ago a study of leisure activities of farm women probably would have indicated that "fancy work" was a hobby with practically everyone who had any leisure. But now there are so many alternative uses of free time that hand work of this character receives less attention. Today much of the lingerie, table and bed linen that were formerly made at home are purchased ready made. For that which is made at home, current fashions in table and house linen and in lingerie emphasize simplicity of decoration, and hence there is less demand for the embroidered motifs, the crocheted lace, and tatting edges than there was previously. Handicrafts were less popular with the group than might have been expected. Here again, it was probably due to the fact that other activities appealed more strongly and

¹One each in sociology, child psychology, history, and short story writing.

²As has been suggested, these figures may not represent the total number who spent some of their leisure in this type of activity.

hence took precedence. Lack of skill doubtless deterred others from engaging in this type of activity.

Playing the piano or organ; other instruments.--More than a third of the women, over two-fifths of those having a piano in their homes, reported that they played it. There is no way of knowing how much of the free time of these 147 women was used in this way, but the general impression gained from reading the statements made by the women was that a number of them devoted a good deal of their leisure to playing. Several of the women who had given piano lessons before their marriage had continued to teach, and several others referred to their activities as pianist for the community club and as organist for church services and for Sunday school. These women, of course, had a special incentive to practice. Although more than two-fifths of the women stated that they had one or more string or wind instruments in their homes, the number reporting that they played them was negligible.

Listening to the radio; listening to the phonograph.--As mentioned above, radio auditing was mentioned by nearly seven-tenths of the women and slightly more than a half reported listening to the phonograph. It is difficult, if not impossible, to appraise the significance of the radio in the lives of farm families. It has literally brought the world to their doorsteps and has opened up avenues to the world of the spirit which many of them heretofore had not even dreamed of. Women are in the house more than other members of the family, and, since many household operations can be carried on while listening to a broadcast, they have probably done more auditing. Broadcasting companies have taken advantage of this situation and have featured day-time programs that they believed would appeal especially to women. That they have been exposed to much drivel goes without saying. But they have also had an opportunity to hear many programs that are excellent in quality. In at least one of the states represented by this group of women a phonograph has been used by the extension specialist in recreation as a device for teaching music appreciation to rural groups.

Other activities.--A number of the activities included under "Other" were found in the questionnaires of the 74 women who used the third edition in answer to the question, "What hobby or hobbies do you have?" Unfortunately, this question did not appear in the earlier editions. A total of 47 women mentioned them. They were distributed among 14 different enterprises. Several of the 74 women did not answer the question; others listed two or more hobbies and a number mentioned activities such as gardening or sewing which had already been included so they were not counted again. Exactly half of the activities reported might

be classified as creative work -- preparing food, remodelling hats, raising chickens, making scrap-books, and so on -- and two, memorizing poetry and tracing family genealogy, involved special mental effort. Collecting things was mentioned by only one woman. The woman who listed "Providing meals and lodging for tourists" as a leisure-time activity probably thought of it as an opportunity to make new social contacts and to provide variety in the daily routine as well as a means of adding to the cash income of the family. The two women who mentioned "Kodaking" gave no details to indicate the extent of their endeavors. It would be interesting to know if they had explored the possibilities of photographing interiors, or if they had concentrated on landscapes or people, and whether they did their own developing and printing. What kind of poetry did the woman who mentioned this pursuit learn -- nature poems, love lyrics, or ancient ballads? Did she specialize on the writings of certain poets? And if so, did she inform herself regarding their personal background and the period in which they wrote?

Such activities as are referred to above, and others that might be suggested, afford an opportunity for the women to express their own individuality, to escape from the routine of every-day life and do a little exploring on their own account. Hence they have far greater significance in a constructive program for the use of leisure time than might be implied by the small number of women who reported them.

Age as a Factor

As would be expected, the more sedentary activities, such as sewing, handicrafts, and letter writing, were more popular with the women aged 55 and over, while the pursuits requiring more physical exertion, such as walking and special nature study, were reported more frequently by those under 45. Piano playing was mentioned by more than two-fifths of the women under 55 but by only one-fifth of the women aged 55 and over. Without doubt many of the younger women were keeping up their practice so they could play for the children to sing or to accompany those who played string or wind instruments. It is probable that some of the older women who formerly played had given it up. It will be recalled that there was a piano in five-sixths of the homes of the group studied. Interest in reading, studying, and in listening to the phonograph and radio remained pretty constant throughout the three groups. All but two of the women aged 55 and over listed gardening, whereas thirteen of the women under 45 made no mention of it. But as suggested above, it was among the women in the latter age group that walking and special nature study were more popular. Sewing was mentioned by slightly more than two-fifths of the women

under 55 and by nearly three-fifths of those aged 55 and over. It is very likely that all of the 400 women did some sewing, but that many of the younger women did not do it from choice. They probably had less mastery of garment construction than the older women who had learned to sew in an era when the commercial manufacture of garments was in its infancy. Of the nineteen women who referred to quilting, eighteen were aged 55 years and over, as were the fourteen women who made rugs, and the three who mentioned knitting.

Formal Education as a Factor

Formal education was a factor of considerable significance in the choice of leisure pursuits individual in character. "Walking," "Special nature study," and "Other writing" were reported by nearly twice as many of the women who had graduated from high

TABLE IV
INDIVIDUAL INTERESTS AND ACTIVITIES REPORTED
CLASSIFIED BY FORMAL EDUCATION OF WOMEN

Activity	Formal education					
	Total		Eighth grade or less		Graduated from high school	
	Num-ber	Per-cent	Num-ber	Per-cent	Num-ber	Per-cent
Total.....	400	100.0	200	100.0	200	100.0
Gardening.....	370	92.5	185	92.5	185	92.5
Walking.....	99	24.8	36	18.0	63	31.5
Special nature study....	105	26.3	36	18.0	69	34.5
Reading.....	396	99.0	199	99.5	197	98.5
Studying.....	109	27.3	40	20.0	69	34.5
Writing letters.....	94	23.5	34	17.0	60	30.0
Other writing.....	46	11.5	16	8.0	30	15.0
Sewing.....	190	47.5	100	50.0	90	45.0
Needlework.....	123	30.8	75	37.5	48	24.0
Handcrafts.....	85	21.3	49	24.5	36	18.0
Playing piano or organ...	147	36.8	63	31.5	84	42.0
Playing other instruments	22	5.5	14	7.0	8	4.0
Listening to phonograph..	205	51.3	104	52.0	101	50.5
Listening to radio.....	272	68.0	131	65.5	141	70.5
Other.....	47	11.8	15	7.5	32	16.0

school (Group B). "Studying," "Writing letters," and "Playing the piano" likewise were more popular with the women in this group, while "Sewing," "Needlework," and "Handcrafts" were mentioned more frequently by the women with a limited amount of schooling (Group A).

Formal education appeared to be a more important factor than age in the choice of some of these activities, since in each age group a larger proportion of the women in Group B reported "Walking," "Special nature study," and "Studying," and a larger percentage of them listed "Other activities," including hobbies. For each age group, "Needlework" and "Handcrafts" were reported by a larger proportion of women in Group A. The most striking differences between the two educational groups were noted among the women aged 35 to 44 years and the least striking differences were found among the women aged 55 years of age and over. It will be recalled that it was among the women aged 35 to 44 years that the greatest disparity in amount of formal education was found. In this age group, all of the 56 women who had graduated from high school had attended college and more than half of them were college graduates.

It is interesting to speculate on the part which factors which frequently are associated with amount of formal education had on the choice of leisure activities reported by these two groups of women. It is generally assumed that families of a higher educational level live in better communities, and that they have a better income. Both of these latter factors may play an important part in making available and in cultivating an interest in a wider choice of leisure pursuits. No information was provided regarding the income of the families in these two educational groups although, as was revealed from such data as size of farm, form of tenure, and number of homes equipped with modern conveniences, the economic status of the entire group of 400 families was considerably better than that for the average farm family in the region studied.

It is plausible to assume that the cultural background of the women with more formal education was different from that of the women with a limited amount of education, that such leisure interests as studying, writing, and nature study received more consideration in the homes in which they grew up than in the homes of the women in the latter group. It is possible that they had access to better elementary schools and that all of their early schooling was on a higher level. It is conceivable that even if the women in the "Graduated from high school" group had not gone on to high school or to college their leisure interests would have been different from those of the other women.

GROUP ACTIVITIES INFORMAL IN CHARACTER

General Character

Of all the possible ways of spending leisure time, that which is capable of bringing the deepest satisfaction, as well as contributing most to the development of the personality, is that which is spent in informal social life with members of one's family or with friends. Indeed, it is largely because of the opportunities for association during leisure moments that people choose to live together in family groups. Certain leisure activities which have been included here have not varied greatly from generation to generation, nor even from century to century, nor do they vary from one culture group to another. Always there has been "visiting" among family members and with friends, and time has been spent in entertaining friends and in being entertained by them. The children of early Greece had their dolls and balls and played with skipping ropes and blind man's buff, and presumably their parents watched them at their play and sometimes joined with them. Dancing, singing, and story telling are arts as old as human records. Many of the legends with which everyone is familiar have been told by parents and grandparents to the children as they gathered around the family hearth centuries before the art of printing was known.

Reading is a comparatively new leisure-time interest for the great majority. This is true likewise of automobile riding, card playing, and going to the movies. These "newer" interests, as well as the "older" interests mentioned above, are found to a greater or lesser degree in the leisure pattern of all families, whether they live on farms in Oregon, in Rhode Island, or in the North Central states, whether they are the families of college instructors in Iowa or of professional men in Westchester County, New York.

The informal group activities reported by the women are shown in the table that follows. As is seen, they are less closely related to the farm woman's work program than those that were included in the earlier table. Some of them, as dancing, card playing, going to the movies, and auto riding are entirely different in kind from work, but others, as picnicking and going to town, include activities which in other classifications may be considered

TABLE V

INFORMAL GROUP ACTIVITIES REPORTED
CLASSIFIED BY AGE OF WOMEN

Activity	Number of women							
	Total		35 to 44 years of age		45 to 54 years of age		55 years of age and over	
	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent
Total.....	400	100.0	112	100.0	188	100.0	100	100.0
Visiting with the family.....	172	43.0	44	39.2	85	45.2	43	43.0
Reading aloud.....	127	31.8	45	40.1	61	32.4	21	21.0
Singing and playing	274	68.5	94	83.9	131	69.6	49	49.0
Playing indoor games.....	305	76.3	88	78.5	149	79.2	68	68.0
Watching children play.....	23	5.7	10	8.9	13	6.8	--	----
Visiting with friends.....	282	70.5	74	66.0	136	72.3	72	72.0
Entertaining and being entertained	333	83.2	82	73.2	167	88.8	84	84.0
Playing cards.....	31	7.7	11	9.8	15	7.9	5	5.0
Dancing.....	12	3.0	6	5.3	5	2.6	1	1.0
Automobile riding..	178	44.5	51	45.4	92	48.9	35	35.0
Picnics.....	178	44.5	50	44.6	84	44.6	44	44.0
Going to town.....	92	23.0	29	25.8	50	26.5	13	13.0
Going to the movies	175	43.8	47	41.9	83	44.1	45	45.0
Participating in dramatics.....	74	18.5	26	23.0	38	20.2	10	10.0
Other ^a	24	6.0	10	8.9	11	5.9	3	3.0

^aIncluded visiting school, visiting legislature, going to vaudeville, musical comedy and opera, and listening to band concerts.

as work, such as the preparation of food for the picnic lunch and the shopping for the family when in town. Except, perhaps, for automobile riding, looking at motion pictures, and watching children play, all the activities included here required active participation on the part of the women. Most if not all of these activities are informal in character. They were carried on chiefly with the family or with the family and friends so no formal organization was necessary.

Informal Activities Reported

Activities Involving Chiefly the Family Group

Visiting with each other.--Visiting with each other, reading aloud, playing games, singing and playing, and watching children play, these comprise the usual activities carried on in the home with family members. All families spend some time in visiting and in story telling. The extent to which the other activities are indulged in varies with family interests and talents, the number and age of the members, and the equipment available. Visiting was so much a part of the regular routine that it apparently did not occur to many of the women to record it. Much visiting usually takes place at meal time, as the work on the farm and in the house proceeds, and during and after meals. No doubt a good deal of the conversation carried on between members of the farm family is concerned with their common occupational interests. In discussing this matter Bailey says:

"This commonality of discussion in the farm home appeals to me as having much significance. If all the members cooperate on one economic basis, we have not only a school in democracy but a means of the most effective intellectual development. . . . In most homes outside of the rural places the conversation does not turn very much on the occupation or the profession in which the head of the house is engaged. There is a curious notion in men's heads that one should not talk shop!"¹

There is no way of knowing the extent to which the families included in this study discussed topics non-vocational in character nor how often they considered subjects that opened up new fields of interest for family members. A number of women who did not list visiting with the family in answer to the question, "What do you do in your leisure?" referred in another section of the questionnaire to the custom observed in their families of discussing at the dinner table interesting articles which the various members had read. Concerning this habit one woman wrote:

"During meal time we often discuss articles which have come to our special notice while reading. This brings out our various opinions on subjects which are before the public. We sometimes have some spirited arguments at the table, especially when the boys are home from college."

¹Liberty Hyde Bailey, New York State Rural Problems (Albany: J. B. Lyon Co., 1915), II, 14-15.

Reading aloud.--Reading aloud was listed as a leisure activity by three-tenths of the women. As would be expected, it was most popular with the families that had young children. Many of the women in this group referred to reading to the little children who had not yet learned to read for themselves. One woman reported that the previous winter her family had studied the Bible together with the aid of an outline which gave the background for the various books. A number of the women said that frequently the family read a book aloud, each one taking his turn, and then they all discussed it together. In referring to this custom, one woman said:

"In our family we often read aloud. We have always made it a practice to ask questions about any matter of general interest which comes up in our reading and is not understood. My husband is unusually well read on current issues, political or general news. We all go to him for information on any important subject. If he doesn't know it himself, he can always tell us where to find it."

Several women referred to the habit they and their husbands had formed of reading aloud to each other in the evening after the children had gone to bed. "My husband usually reads aloud to me while I sew," one woman wrote. "That's when I get the mending done without feeling sorry for myself."

Family singing and playing.--If one is to judge by the replies of the women in this selected group, the radio and the phonograph have not eliminated family singing and playing. It was listed as a favorite pastime by over three-fifths of the women. One of the older women said, "When the children were at home, we sang together nearly every evening. Now that they are in homes of their own we always have a 'sing' whenever we get together." "None of us have wonderful voices," another woman wrote, "but we all love to sing, and we have a good time doing it." One woman, in referring to the good times they had singing together, said, "Frequently our neighbors come in for the evening and we have someone play, and everyone, young and old, sings. We sing all the old songs that everyone knows, from church hymns to old Civil War songs." Several women spoke of helping the children with their music and of accompanying them on the piano. In over two-fifths of the four hundred homes there was either a string or a wind instrument, and in one-eighth of the homes there were both. The growing interest in the establishment of high school and 4-H bands and orchestras probably explains the presence of these instruments in such a goodly proportion of the homes. A

number of the women referred to their family orchestra or trio and spoke of the good times they had playing together. In one family the mother played the piano, the father the violin, and two of the four children played harmonicas. In another family the mother played the piano, the son a trumpet, the oldest daughter a guitar, and the small daughter a banjo. A third woman said that she and their three children spent much of their leisure in practicing music, since they often appeared on programs in the community. She played the piano, the son, the cornet, and each of the two daughters played the violin.

Watching children play.--In the homes in which there are infants and pre-school children, a good deal of time is often spent by the mother in watching them and in guiding them in their play. This was mentioned by only twenty-three women in the group studied, although it probably accounted for a considerable proportion of the free time of all who had children under school age. Anyone who has been in a home in which there is a young baby can testify as to the time that often is consumed just in watching him as he explores his environment.

Playing indoor games.--Over three-fourths of the women referred to playing indoor games as a form of recreation which the family enjoyed together.¹ This is probably a much higher proportion than would be found in an urban community where neighbors live close by and the children can get together much more easily. Under such conditions, association on the basis of age and sex

¹The data yielded on this point were somewhat confusing, due in part to the way in which the question was formulated. The women were asked, "What is (or was) the favorite recreation of the family -- indoor, outdoor?" Those who formulated the questionnaire probably anticipated that the women would cross out one of the verbs and thus indicate whether they were referring to a situation that existed in the present or in the past. Since they did not do this, it was decided in interpreting the data on indoor games to check as "Not reported" the women who listed only such forms of indoor recreation as dolls, dishes, clay, crayons, doll's houses, and blocks, where the play was very obviously on the child's level, but to count as participants the mothers of children under eighteen who reported such games as checkers, authors, parchesi, cross-word puzzles, ping pong, table croquet, and dominoes. (Card playing was not included here but was reported separately.) The women who had no children under eighteen who were counted as participants were those who had added a note in which they had indicated quite clearly that this was a leisure-time activity in which they were then participating.

and special interests is much more frequent and there is apt to be participation as a family in activities of this nature. No doubt the younger women who had children at home played games with them quite frequently during the long winter evenings. The older women probably played on the occasions when their grandchildren or nieces and nephews visited them. One woman said, "The children like to have their father and me play the games with them and we often do." Similar remarks were included with sufficient frequency to suggest that with this group of families the practice was quite general. In Gardner's study of the leisure-time activities of rural children in West Virginia she found quite a different situation. The number of children who mentioned the use of games and other home-play equipment was a small proportion of the total number interviewed. Very few children spoke of playing games with either of their parents as a part of their leisure program.

Activities Carried on with Friends

Visiting.--It is quite generally assumed that the use of leisure in traditional ways, such as spontaneous and informal neighborhood visiting, is still an outstanding characteristic of rural community life. The degree to which this was true of the families of the women studied can not be determined from the figures presented. It is evident that farm families of today have opportunities for more frequent visits with friends than they had in the past, due in part to the advent of such utilities as the telephone and the automobile. It will be recalled that there was a telephone in all but thirty-two of the homes of the women studied, and all but fourteen had an automobile. Many of the 282 women who reported that they spent part of their leisure time visiting friends referred to visiting over the telephone and a number of them spoke of making brief calls on neighbors during their free time in the afternoon. Others spoke of accompanying their husbands when they made business calls to the homes of neighbors, and several referred to frequent calls from friends and relatives living in town. Okada¹ found that the Texas and Oklahoma farm women whose records she studied reported "Visiting with friends" much more frequently than the women in Iowa and Illinois. Possibly this was due in part to the fact that the women in Iowa and Illinois were more active in the organized group life of the

¹Miyo Okada, "A Comparison of the Leisure-Time Activities of Two Hundred Farm Women Living in Two Regions of the United States." (Unpublished Master's thesis, Department of Home Economics, University of Chicago, 1933).

communities in which they lived and hence had less time to devote to informal visiting.

Entertaining and being entertained.--In this discussion a distinction has been made between informal visiting with relatives and friends in the home and over the telephone, and entertaining them in one's home or being entertained by them. The latter suggests hospitality, a conscious "taking thought" for the pleasure of the guests. It implies some leisure. From the many references which they made to entertaining it was evident that it had a prominent place in the leisure program of the women studied. In answer to the question, "What are some of the special things which you do to promote mutual joy in home life?" many of those aged fifty-five years or more referred to the family custom of entertaining for birthdays, Thanksgiving, and Christmas the married sons and daughters and their families. In many cases their children had settled on the adjoining farms and hence were easily accessible; in other instances they drove from places many miles distant. A good deal of the entertaining reported by the younger women was done, no doubt, especially for their sons and daughters. One woman, the mother of two sons, one in high school, the other a sophomore in college, wrote: "Mr. M. and I are both very fond of young people. The boys often bring their girl friends to our home and we have big times making ice-cream, eating watermelons, singing and talking."

Entertaining friends and being entertained by them tends to be less of an ordeal for the farm family of the present era than it was when this generation of parents were children. Formerly, when roads were poor and traveling was done with horse and buggy, visits to the homes of friends or relatives could be made much less frequently. When they did go, everyone in the family was usually included, and it was the custom to invite guests to spend the day. The hostess' task was often an arduous one. She labored long and hard in a poorly equipped and badly lighted kitchen to prepare elaborate "company meals" for the guests, who came in the morning and stayed for dinner and an early supper. Today, good roads and automobiles have greatly reduced distances between farms and have made possible association over a much wider radius than formerly.¹ A practice that is now common on many

¹Actually the percentage of farm families whose farms are located on paved roads is much smaller than is generally realized. According to the 1930 census, slightly less than 10 per cent of the 6,288,648 farms in the United States were thus located. Twenty per cent were located on gravel, 26 per cent on improved dirt, and 44 per cent on all other roads. (Source: U. S. Bureau of the

farms is to invite friends to come for supper and to spend the evening. With increased knowledge of the principles of menu-planning, meals served to guests tend to be less elaborate, and carefully-worked out, fool-proof recipes, and modern cooking equipment have helped to reduce the time required for food preparation. Much of the processing of foods formerly carried on in the home is now done in the factory and the housewife is responsible only for the end processes of production of many foods. All of these changes help to make entertaining today a truly enjoyable experience.

Card playing.--Card playing was mentioned by only thirty-one of the 400 women. One woman wrote, "I never play cards." It may be that some of the 369 women who did not refer to the matter simply forgot to mention that fact. It is possible, too, that although many of the 369 women did play occasionally, card playing was not in the mores of the older families in the community, and rather than incur their displeasure they had formed the habit of saying nothing about it. With a good many of the families which these farm women represented it is probable that card playing was looked upon with disfavor. It was frowned upon in Puritan New England and denounced by various sectarian groups in the Middle West. Although many people in urban centers who formerly disapproved of this diversion have now included it among their leisure-time pursuits, it apparently has not yet found favor with many rural people.

Dancing.--Dancing likewise had a negligible place in the leisure pattern of these farm women. It is plausible to suppose that with some of them it formerly had ranked high as a leisure-time activity, but as they became older other types of recreation less vigorous in character claimed their attention. It is quite probable, too, that among the older members of the group there were several who disapproved of dancing.

Information regarding the place which these activities hold in the leisure-time program of urban people is available from two studies. In their study of the contemporary life of Middletown, a representative middle-western industrial city of 35,000 inhabitants, the Lynds¹ found that "Cards and dancing are the standard entertainment. In general, dancing holds the position of preeminence with the younger group prior to marriage, while from marriage on the more sedentary activity predominates." Lundberg found that

Census, Fifteenth Census of the United States (1930), Agriculture, II, part I, p. 12.

¹R. S. and H. M. Lynd, Middletown (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1929), pp. 281-2.

dancing was engaged in with frequency by only about 15 per cent of the population in Westchester County, but card playing was reported by over two-thirds of the 107 housewives whose diaries he studied. The housewives who played cards spent an average of 75 minutes a day, or over eight and one-half hours a week in this way.¹

Outdoor Activities Carried on with
Members of the Family or with Friends

Automobile riding.--Automobile riding, just for the sake of the variety it affords and the opportunity it presents to enjoy new or different scenes, was not so much a part of the leisure pattern of this group as might have been expected. It was mentioned by less than half (44.5 per cent) of the women although there was an automobile in all but sixteen of the homes. Perhaps it was so much a part of their regular programs that it did not occur to them to mention it. And it may be that automobiling just for the sake of relaxation may be indulged in only infrequently by farm families. It is possible that they consider the automobile more as a utility that will take them to the places they want to go than as a piece of leisure-time equipment. Over four-fifths of the women under forty-five drove the car, but not quite half of those aged forty-five and over.

Picnics.--Picnics appeared to enjoy the same degree of popularity as automobile riding since they, too, were mentioned by 178 women. From the statements made by several, it was evident that they found special pleasure in this form of activity. Two women, one from Illinois and one from North Dakota, told of outdoor fireplaces in their yards where the families frequently cooked their dinner. One of them wrote in some detail about it.

"We have a picnic table out there and in summer when the weather is nice, we often cook our supper over the open fire. After supper we wash our dishes and sit around the fire and play games and sing. Sometimes we invite some other family to join us, and the children take turns entertaining their friends. But often we enjoy it just by ourselves."

Other women have included a sentence or two about the types of picnics that they and their families enjoyed.

"We all enjoy taking our picnic dinner and going to the park, the fish hatchery, or some other natural beauty spot."

1G. A. Lundberg, M. Komarovsky, and M. A. McInerny, Leisure, A Suburban Study (New York: Columbia University Press, 1934).

"Every spring we pack our lunch and go to the timber pasture and look for the various kinds of flowers, birds, and trees."

"We all like picnics. We always enjoy ourselves better if the whole family is there, and unless there is a good reason for someone to stay at home we all go."

"We all love to take our dinner to the woods and cook it over an open fire. We have a lovely grove of our own, and in the summer we spend many Sundays there."

One wonders if picnics had no place in the leisure-time program of the 222 women who made no mention of them. Some of them no doubt lived in a section of the country that is lacking in parks, lakes, or other natural picnic sites. But even in those cases it would seem that a hilltop might be found from which one could enjoy the sunset and the distant view and the relaxation that comes from eating the simplest of meals in a different environment. The attitude of family members has much to do in determining whether or not certain activities will be indulged in by the family. One woman, in commenting on the situation in her family, said, "We do not have many picnics because Dad is no sport and doesn't like them."

Going to Town, Going to the Movies

As in the case of automobile riding, going to town did not appear to have a very important place in the leisure-time program of the group studied. It was mentioned by fewer than one-fourth of the women. Without doubt most of them were too busy to spend much time going to town merely for the diversion it afforded. But since many of the community and county meetings which they attended were held in urban centers, it is probable that "Going to town" had an incidental place in the schedule of a large percentage of the women in the group.

Less antipathy to motion pictures was expressed by these farm women than might have been expected. Of those who replied to the question, only 10 per cent said that they never went and only one gave any evidence of her disapproval. This one remarked, "I never was in a theater but once in my life and I have never spent a dime on motion picture shows." Fifteen women said that they went once a month. One woman who lived near a large center wrote, "Every month when the milk check comes the entire family goes to a movie. Each one has his turn in selecting the film he especially wants to see." A number spoke of the low admission price charged and the excellent films shown in the auditorium of their consolidated school. One-half of the women in the group did not give any information on the matter and

TABLE VI
FREQUENCY OF ATTENDANCE AT MOTION PICTURES
CLASSIFIED BY AGE OF WOMEN

Frequency of attendance	Number of women							
	Total		35 to 44 years of age		45 to 54 years of age		55 years of age and over	
	Num-ber	Per-cent	Num-ber	Per-cent	Num-ber	Per-cent	Num-ber	Per-cent
Total.....	400	100.0	112	100.0	188	100.0	100	100.0
Never.....	20	5.0	5	4.5	9	4.8	6	6.0
At least once a month.....	15	3.7	7	6.3	7	3.7	1	1.0
Occasionally.....	31	7.7	8	7.1	22	11.7	1	1.0
Seldom.....	129	32.3	32	28.5	54	28.7	43	43.0
Not reported.....	205	51.3	60	53.6	96	51.1	49	49.0

two-thirds of those reporting said, "We very seldom go." But there was no evidence that it was because they did not approve of motion pictures. No doubt one reason why these women went so infrequently was that the meager cash incomes received by farmers, especially during the depression years, has meant that for most farm families a cash expenditure of this nature is out of the question. The mediocre character of the films frequently shown in small communities has doubtless been another deterrent. In answer to the question, "Name some pictures that you have especially enjoyed," the women referred to such films as "The Covered Wagon," "The Birth of a Nation," "Riders of the Purple Sage," "The Virginian," "The Ten Commandments," and "Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm," in short, productions that would be characterized as good, clean shows.

Participating in Dramatics

Nearly a fifth of the women in the group reported participation in activities related to the production of plays, pageants, or playlets in their community or county. In some cases the woman's role was that of director of the production, in other instances she was in charge of some special detail, as the costumes or the stage settings, and a number of women reported that they

were one of the performers.¹ Interest in amateur acting on the part of rural people has developed quite rapidly within the last two or three decades. It is a part of a rather widespread revival of interest in this ancient art on the part of adults. In urban centers it has found expression in the "Little Theater" movement. In rural communities the impetus for activities in this field has come from members of the extension and resident teaching staffs of the state agricultural colleges.² Some of the colleges and universities have sponsored county-wide and state-wide drama tournaments, and the winners have presented their productions at the state college or university at the time of the annual Farmers' Week. In some communities the efforts have been less ambitious in character and have been participated in chiefly by the women, who have been encouraged to write and direct their own skits or playlets which are presented at the annual achievement days in the communities and counties. These playlets depict graphically the year's achievements in the various extension projects. In other counties and communities the emphasis has been placed on pageants which have covered such subjects as the development of the program in adult education, the evolution of the home, the emancipation of women, or the settlement and growth of the county or community. Statements made by a number of the 400 women suggested that this field of interest made a very strong appeal to them. One of the women, the mother of four children, referred to the amateur theatricals presented by the P----- Literary Society, made up entirely of the members of their family. "The performances are given in our barn loft," she wrote. "The barn is wired and we have built a stage. The children write some of the plays themselves."

Other Activities

Several of the women who referred to going to vaudeville, musical comedy, and opera lived near urban centers where there was opportunity to attend such performances. Only a small number mentioned "Visiting school." It is less popular today than it was in an earlier era when there were fewer diversions for farm

¹Ten of the women who included writing among their leisure-time activities spoke of writing playlets or pageants. (Table III, p. 8.)

²A. F. Wileden, E. T. Rockwell, and G. L. Borchers, Dramatics for Amateur Groups, Wisconsin Agricultural Extension Service, Circular 257 (Madison, 1933); D. E. Lindstrom, Organizing for Rural Home-Talent Tournaments, Illinois Agricultural Experiment Station, Circular 376 (Urbana, 1931).

The Relationship of Age and Amount of Formal Education

Age

What effect had age upon the frequency with which these various activities were reported? As might be surmised, certain of the informal group activities were more generally reported by the younger group. Thus "Reading aloud" was mentioned by two-fifths of the younger women but by only one-fifth of those aged 55 and over. "Singing and playing" were mentioned by five-sixths of the women under 45 and by one-half of the older women, and more of the younger women reported that they spent time "Playing indoor games." This is to be expected since there were one or more children in all but seven of the homes of the women under 45 years, and in half of them there were two or more, while there were no children in the homes of three-fourths of the women aged 55 and over. More of the younger women mentioned auto riding, and more than twice as many reported going to town and participating in dramatics. On the other hand, a larger proportion of the older women mentioned entertaining friends and being entertained by them, and a slightly larger percentage listed going to the movies. Age apparently had no effect on the extent to which this group enjoyed picnics, since they were mentioned by 44 per cent of the women in each age group.

Formal Education

Since most of the activities listed here are quite conventional in character and are indulged in to some extent by individuals at all educational levels, it is not surprising that formal education apparently had little effect on the choices of the women in the group studied. A somewhat higher proportion of the women in the "Graduated from high school" group (Group B) reported visiting with the family, reading aloud, watching children play, going to picnics, and going to the movies, while a slightly larger proportion of the women with a limited amount of formal education (Group A) mentioned singing and playing, and activities in connection with dramatics. But in no cases were the proportions large enough to be significant.

In the selection of books to read aloud, of songs for group singing, and of films to see it might be expected that the choices made by the women in Group B would rate higher qualitatively than those made by the women in Group A. It would be expected, too, that the quality of the acting in home talent plays would be on a higher level.

TABLE VII
INFORMAL GROUP ACTIVITIES REPORTED
CLASSIFIED BY FORMAL EDUCATION OF WOMEN

Activity	Number of women					
	Total		Formal education			
			Eighth grade or less		Graduated from high school	
	Num-ber	Per-cent	Num-ber	Per-cent	Num-ber	Per-cent
Total.....	400	100.0	200	100.0	200	100.0
Visiting with the family...	172	43.0	72	36.0	100	50.0
Reading aloud.....	127	31.8	53	26.5	74	37.0
Singing and playing.....	274	68.5	142	71.0	132	66.0
Playing indoor games.....	305	76.3	152	76.0	153	76.5
Watching children play.....	23	5.8	6	3.0	17	8.5
Visiting with friends.....	282	70.5	141	70.5	141	70.5
Entertaining and being entertained.....	333	83.3	169	84.5	164	82.0
Playing cards.....	31	7.8	17	8.5	14	7.0
Dancing.....	12	3.0	5	2.5	7	3.5
Automobile riding.....	178	44.5	84	42.0	94	47.0
Picnics.....	178	44.5	84	42.0	94	47.0
Going to town.....	92	23.0	51	25.5	41	20.5
Going to the movies.....	175	43.8	82	41.0	93	46.5
Participating in dramatics.	74	18.5	42	21.0	32	16.0
Other.....	24	6.0	11	5.5	13	6.5

ORGANIZED GROUP ACTIVITIES OF FARM WOMEN

Membership in Organizations

A considerable proportion of the leisure time of almost all the farm women studied was devoted to activities connected with various types of voluntary organizations. It is not surprising that this was true inasmuch as the project of which the questionnaires used in the study were a part emphasized participation in the organized life of the community and county. It will be noted that many of the voluntary organizations to which the women belonged centered around the major institutions found there -- the home, the school, and the church.

Organizations Centering in the Church

Attendance at church and Sunday school.--The church is the outstanding agency of religion in the community and as such has its special functions to perform. But at the same time that it performs its chief functions it also serves other interests, among which are the social, recreational, and the aesthetic. It is partly because of its contribution to the satisfaction of these latter interests that it is considered here.

There is another reason why church attendance and the extent of participation in activities centering in the church are important in a consideration of the leisure-time interests and activities of farm women. The average rural church must operate on a very limited budget. In order to perform even its religious functions at all adequately it must depend to a large extent upon the voluntary unpaid assistance of its members, especially of its women members. Active membership in a rural church implies far more than attendance at services on Sunday. It always includes participation in the plans for raising the necessary funds for operating expenses and for the minister's salary and cooperation in the social and recreational program sponsored by the church, and often it involves cooperation in the teaching program. It is evident, then, that it may account for a good deal of the free time of farm women and thus may have a prominent place in the leisure-spending pattern which they present.

The farm women were asked to answer the following questions with reference to their participation in the program of the church:

What church do you attend? Is it located in the community or in town? How far is it from your home? How often have you attended religious services in the past year? What church work do you do?

The significant information from these questions is summarized in the table given below. Over three-fifths of the women said that they attended services every Sunday, and a tenth said that they went every other Sunday. A number of the latter group explained that in their church services were held on alternate Sundays only, but that they attended Sunday school every Sunday. One may conclude

TABLE VIII
ATTENDANCE AT CHURCH AND SUNDAY SCHOOL
CLASSIFIED BY AGE OF WOMEN

Attendance at church services and at Sunday school	Number of women							
	Total		35 to 44 years of age		45 to 54 years of age		55 years of age and over	
	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent
Total.....	400	100.0	112	100.0	188	100.0	100	100.0
Attendance at church services:								
Every Sunday.....	252	63.0	76	67.8	112	59.6	64	64.0
Half time.....	39	9.7	13	11.6	15	8.0	11	11.0
Once a month.....	53	13.3	13	11.6	32	17.0	8	8.0
Less than five times annually..	19	4.7	5	4.5	10	5.3	4	4.0
Not answered.....	37	9.3	5	4.5	19	10.1	13	13.0
Attendance at Sunday school:								
Every Sunday.....	53	13.2	14	12.5	27	14.4	12	12.0
Half time.....	8	2.0	2	1.8	2	1.0	4	4.0
Once a month.....	3	0.8	1	0.9	2	1.0	--	----
Not reported.....	336	84.0	95	84.8	157	83.6	84	84.0

that nearly three-fourths of the women made a practice of attending services every Sunday that any were held in their church. Thirty-two women reported that they sang in the choir, and twenty-two that they played the organ for church services. Eight were

members of the Board of Stewards of the church. Apparently in a few of the churches which the women attended there was a Sunday school class for adults, since approximately one-sixth of the women reported that they attended Sunday school. But in most cases the woman's affiliation with a Sunday school was that of a teacher of a class of young people.

Membership in church societies.--Over half of the 400 women were members of the Ladies' Aid¹ and one-third were members of a Missionary Society. More than one-fourth (28 per cent) of the 266 different women who reported memberships in these two organizations belonged to both. Twenty-two women reported membership in other organizations affiliated with the church and one-third of the women did not belong to any. The program followed by Missionary Societies is directly related to the teaching program of the church. The usual plan followed is to assign readings and to discuss the assignments at the regular meetings of the society. On the other hand, the Ladies' Aid or Women's Guild exists primarily to make money for the church, but at the same time it performs certain social functions. In many places the members meet regularly to make quilts or other articles for sale and it is this organization which usually sponsors church dinners and socials. Frequently in rural communities membership in the Ladies' Aid includes many women who have no other affiliation with the church but who enjoy the social contacts which membership in this organization make possible.

Organizations Centering in the Home and the School

Home economics extension.--Next to the church, the organization of paramount importance in the lives of the women studied was that which sponsored the program in adult education commonly known as "extension work."² All but 40 of the women in the group

¹Includes not only the memberships in the organization in Evangelical churches that goes by that name but, in addition, membership in the Woman's Guild of the Episcopalian church, the Altar society of the Catholic church, and so on.

²The program in adult education for farm people is sponsored by the United States Department of Agriculture in cooperation with the State Agricultural Colleges. It was made possible on a national scale by the passage of the Smith-Lever Act in 1914 which provided federal funds to the states cooperating. In the states, the program is promoted by administrative officers and subject matter "specialists" located at the State Agricultural Colleges, and in the counties by men trained in agriculture (county agricultural agents) and by women trained in home economics

studied reported active membership in the extension organization in their state.¹ Many of the women did not mention the projects which their organization was working on at the time they filled out the questionnaire. The statements made by those who did give some information on this subject indicated that the homemaking problems considered were quite varied. Major emphasis was placed on vocational problems common to all homemakers, problems that arise in feeding and clothing the family, and in managing time and money and human resources. The problem of relationships in the family was considered in some groups, and parental education and child development were studied by others. Several women referred to their activities in connection with the farm women's market, an agency for the sale of goods produced on the farm or in the home. In communities in which Parent-Teachers' Associations had not been organized the extension organization had sponsored school lunches, cooperated with the teachers in plans to secure playground equipment, in weighing and measuring pupils, and in providing for medical examinations. This organization had also sponsored farm women's camps and county library systems and had promoted the production of home talent plays.

Parent-Teacher Association.--Exactly one-third of the women studied reported membership in the Parent-Teacher Association, an organization designed to promote child welfare in the home, the

(home demonstration agents). In addition to work with adults, these county agents also work with farm boys and girls who are members of 4-H clubs. However, in a good many counties the 4-H club program is in charge of a club agent, who is also a member of the county extension staff. For a detailed history of the development, particularly as it relates to farm women, see Lucile W. Reynolds, "Adult Education with Especial Reference to the Rural Woman." (Unpublished Master's thesis, Department of Home Economics, University of Chicago, 1927.)

¹In some of the North Central states this organization is known as the Farm Bureau, in Illinois it is the Home Bureau, in other states it is the County Extension Service in Agriculture and Home Economics. The unit of organization for project work is the neighborhood, school district, or trading center but the county is the unit for administration. There is considerable variation in the name given to the local unit in the different states. Thus in Kentucky it is called the "Homemakers' Club" and in South Dakota it is the "Home Demonstration Club." In West Virginia the community club sponsors the extension program. In the tables that follow, all these various types have been classified as "Home economics extension groups."

TABLE IX
ORGANIZATIONS TO WHICH WOMEN BELONGED
CLASSIFIED BY AGE OF WOMEN

Organization	Number of women							
	Total		35 to 44 years of age		45 to 54 years of age		55 years of age and over	
	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent
Total.....	400	100.0	112	100.0	188	100.0	100	100.0
Church organizations:								
Ladies' Aid.....	205	51.2	49	43.7	106	56.3	50	50.0
Missionary society.....	136	34.0	40	35.7	61	32.4	35	35.0
Others ^a	22	5.5	7	6.2	7	3.7	8	8.0
Home and school:								
Home economics extension group.	360	90.0	102	91.0	171	90.9	87	87.0
Parent-Teacher Association.....	134	33.5	44	39.2	67	35.6	23	23.0
Women's federated club.....	21	5.2	4	3.5	9	4.7	8	8.0
Agricultural organizations:								
Grange.....	22	5.5	2	1.8	12	6.3	8	8.0
Others ^b	32	8.0	10	8.8	11	5.7	11	11.0
Fraternal organizations:								
Eastern Star.....	49	12.2	12	10.7	27	14.3	10	10.0
Daughters of Rebekah.....	17	4.2	6	5.3	8	4.2	3	3.0
Others ^c	25	6.2	3	2.6	13	6.9	9	9.0
Citizenship and political:								
School board.....	30	7.5	9	8.0	13	6.9	8	8.0
Election board...	2	0.5	2	1.8	--	----	--	----
League of Women Voters.....	5	1.2	--	----	4	2.1	1	1.0
Republican and Democratic Women's Clubs...	7	1.7	--	----	3	1.6	4	4.0
Welfare organi- zations ^d	8	2.0	4	3.5	2	1.0	2	2.0
Patriotic societies ^e	21	5.2	7	6.2	7	3.7	7	7.0
Community club.....	80	20.0	22	19.6	43	22.8	15	15.0
Social club.....	78	19.5	19	16.8	39	20.7	20	20.0
Garden and flower club.....	10	2.5	--	----	4	2.1	6	6.0

(continued)

TABLE IX -- CONTINUED

Organization	Number of women							
	Total		35 to 44 years of age		45 to 54 years of age		55 years of age and over	
	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent
Total.....	400	100.0	112	100.0	188	100.0	100	100.0
Study clubs, miscellaneous.....	19	4.8	8	7.1	8	4.2	3	3.0
Unclassified:								
Women's Christian Temperance Union	40	10.0	10	8.8	17	9.0	13	13.0
All other ^f	21	5.2	7	6.2	10	5.3	4	4.0
Total number of memberships in organizations...	1344		367		642		335	
Average number of memberships per woman.....	3.36		3.27		3.41		3.35	

^aInclude county council of religious education, Young People's Union, Christian Endeavor, Friendly Sisters, board of stewards, Epworth League, Dorcas Society, Benevolent Society, and Luther League.

^bInclude Farm Bureau, Farmers' Insitute, Farmers' Union, Poultry Association, Women's Protective Farmers' Association, National Farm and Garden Association, Dairymen's Association, and State Horticultural Society.

^cInclude Women's Relief Corps, P.E.O., Royal Neighbors, Pythian Sisters, Mystic Workers, and Modern Woodmen.

^dInclude Red Cross, county public health association, and county tuberculosis association.

^eInclude American Legion, Daughters of the American Revolution, and United Daughters of the Confederacy.

^fInclude college sororities, American Association of University Women, Y.W.C.A., county park associations and cemetery associations.

school, the church, and the community, and to bring the home and the school into closer relationship. Originating in 1897, its earliest stronghold was in urban centers, but more recently it has extended into rural communities. It is especially vigorous in consolidated school districts. All but ten of the 134 women who reported membership in the association were also members of the extension organization.

Women's Federated Clubs.--This heading has been used to designate membership in two types of clubs, those that were affiliated with the General Federation of Women's Clubs and those that were affiliated with a state federation of Farm Women's Clubs. Ohio has a federation of the latter type which is sponsored by an agricultural journal, the Ohio Farmer. Through its efforts farm women's clubs have been formed throughout the state and are united in a federation.¹

Agricultural Organizations

Membership in the Grange was reported by only 22 women, 5 per cent of the group, and in all other types of agricultural organizations by only 8 per cent of the group.² For many years the Grange (which was founded in 1867) was the dominant organization in many rural communities in the North Central states. The constitution provided that women should be admitted to membership on the same terms as men, and they were also eligible to hold office. In the states in which it flourished there is no doubt that it has played a very important rôle in socializing the rural communities. Michigan and Ohio, two of the states represented in this study, continue to have a large membership.

Fraternal Organizations

Not quite one-fourth of the women in the group reported membership in fraternal organizations. There are no published data relative to the place of these organizations in the life of farm women of an earlier era. They were formed during the latter half of the nineteenth century, most of them as auxiliaries to men's societies, and presumably have held an important place in the life of many women. During the last two or three decades

¹Sophonisba P. Breckinridge, Women in the Twentieth Century (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1933), p. 74.

²It is probable that the actual number of women who were members of the Farm Bureau is larger than was reported here. If the activities reported under Farm Bureau indicated that they were a part of the home economics extension program they were placed in that category.

they have grown less rapidly. Their place has been taken by some of the more recently formed organizations with broader objectives.¹

All Other Organizations

Thirty women were members of the school board. With this exception, membership in organizations in the category of citizenship and politics were negligible. Ten per cent of the women belonged to the Women's Christian Temperance Union (better known as the W.C.T.U.), 2 per cent reported membership in such welfare organizations as the Red Cross, Public Health, and Tuberculosis Associations, and 5 per cent in such patriotic societies as the American Legion, Daughters of the American Revolution, and United Daughters of the Confederacy.

One-fifth of the women listed membership in community clubs, and the same number were members of social clubs. The functions served by community clubs vary so greatly in different communities that no general statement suffices. In communities in which they exist side by side with an extension organization and possibly a Parent-Teacher Association it is probable that the community club gives major consideration to certain social and recreational interests not cared for by the other organizations. If the other organizations do not exist in the community, the community club is the clearing house for all organized activities. Some of the social clubs were composed of both men and women members, and in others all the members were women. Dancing and cards were the chief activities for half a dozen of these groups, and sewing for several others. Several of the women who reported membership in these clubs did not go into detail regarding the program.

Nineteen women reported membership in study clubs of various types. Six were in book clubs, two in amateur music clubs, one studied art, one was a member of the State Historical

¹ It is Taylor's opinion that in an earlier rural society when the standard of living was self-contained (due to the fact that farm people had no means of and no occasion for comparing their standard with that of other segments of society), farm people contented themselves with social and fraternal associations. As soon as they obtained a means and a method of observation of other classes with higher living standards they became interested in seeking a higher standard for themselves and aligned themselves with organizations [such as those sponsored by the government] that were concerned with this problem. Carl C. Taylor, "Farmers' Organizations," Social Science Encyclopaedia, VI, 129.

Association, and nine did not disclose the special field of interest pursued by the group to which they belonged. From statements made by several of the women it was evident that membership in these clubs consisted chiefly of urban women. Ten women were members of garden and flower clubs and twenty-one belonged to such organizations as college sororities, the American Association of University Women, the Young Women's Christian Association, and park and cemetery associations.

What explanation may be offered for the relative paucity of organizations in the rural community other than those sponsored by the church, the school, and the extension service? One reason is that participation in the activities of organizations takes a considerable amount of time, and most farm women have only a limited amount of time to devote to leisure activities of this type. Rather than dissipate their energies among a number of organizations, the majority of them apparently preferred to concentrate on one or two. Membership in the extension organization and in the Parent-Teacher Association is open to every woman in the community, and an effort is made to get everyone to join. Because there are comparatively few evidences of social differentiation or stratification in rural society, farm women usually find it possible to work together harmoniously. Their backgrounds have been similar and they have many common occupational and economic interests which can be served much more economically by one organization than by a number, each of which would be competing for the same individuals as members. Probably the most important reason why there are few virile organizations in rural communities is that the leadership necessary to promote them is lacking. While it is true that the proportion of trained leaders in any society is not large, the actual number of such leaders in any given area of a city is much larger than the number found in a similar area in the country, due of course to the greater density of population in the city.

The organizations affiliated with the church and those sponsored by the extension service have had the guidance of professionally trained, salaried leaders, the ministers and the extension agents. The objectives of the organizations which these leaders have sponsored have been rather definitely formulated, and the main features of the program pretty clearly outlined. They have been designed to promote the interests of two major social institutions, the home and the church. The extension organization is a tax-supported enterprise sponsored by the United States Department of Agriculture in cooperation with the State Agricultural Colleges. This affiliation with a department of the federal government and a state college or university has given the movement

a certain prestige in the community. But without doubt a chief reason why it has continued to meet with such a hearty response from rural people is the flexibility of the program it has sponsored. At the same time that such practical problems as better food, health, and clothing standards, and matters of general community welfare have been considered, it has recognized the importance of catering to definite recreational and social interests of families. Its objectives are sufficiently broad to enable it to expand its program when it seems desirable.

Leadership Responsibilities Assumed by the Women

It is possible to have functioning organizations of the character described above in the rural communities only because farm homemakers are sufficiently interested to be willing to assume their share of responsibilities as officers and leaders. Many of the women in the group studied were participating actively in the extension programs -- as local leaders or officers of community and county project groups, as 4-H club leaders, as members of county and state executive committees, and as teachers of local groups of women in their own communities. In addition, they functioned as officers of the Parent-Teacher Association, the Ladies' Aid, Missionary Societies, lodges, and as Sunday-school teachers. Many of the Sunday-school teachers also functioned as superintendents or assistant superintendents of the Sunday school. The leadership responsibilities of the group have been summarized in Table LII. It will be noted that they averaged 2.39 per woman.

As frequently is true of quantitative data, these figures give a very inadequate picture of the important part which these women have played in the promotion of organized group life in the rural communities in their county. Nor do such figures indicate the social value of these experiences to the leaders themselves. They give no indication of the time spent in preparing illustrative material, in telephoning members, in compiling reports, and in attendance at committee meetings. Many of the organizations mentioned above hold meetings once or twice a month for eight or ten, and in some cases for twelve months of the year. Some of the meetings are held in the afternoon, others in the evening, and a number are all-day meetings.

Time Spent in Organized Activities

No information is available as to the actual amount of time which the 400 women devoted to this field of interest. Kneeland found that the average amount of time which the 642 farm

TABLE X
ORGANIZATIONS IN WHICH WOMEN WERE LEADERS OR OFFICERS
CLASSIFIED BY AGE OF WOMEN

Organization	Number of women							
	Total		35 to 44 years of age		45 to 54 years of age		55 years of age and over	
	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent
Total.....	400	100.0	112	100.0	188	100.0	100	100.0
Church organi- zations:								
Ladies' Aid.....	81	20.3	27	24.1	34	18.0	20	20.0
Missionary Society.....	63	15.8	25	22.3	26	13.8	12	12.0
Sunday school....	157	39.3	52	46.4	63	33.5	42	42.0
Home and school:								
Home economics extension group								
Community.....	255	63.8	74	66.0	121	64.3	60	60.0
County and/or state.....	102	25.5	25	22.3	58	30.8	19	19.0
4-H club.....	78	19.5	26	23.2	39	20.7	13	13.0
Parent-Teacher Association.....	57	14.3	25	22.3	24	12.7	8	8.0
Women's federated clubs.....	--	----	--	----	--	----	--	----
Agricultural organ- izations:								
Grange.....	--	----	--	----	--	----	--	----
Others.....	--	----	--	----	--	----	--	----
Fraternal associ- ations.....	49	12.3	17	15.1	24	12.7	8	8.0
Citizenship and political.....	12	3.0	4	3.5	3	1.6	5	5.0
Welfare organi- zations.....	5	1.3	2	1.8	1	0.5	2	2.0
Women's Christian Temperance Union.	11	2.8	3	2.7	7	3.7	1	1.0
Patriotic societies	2	0.5	1	0.9	1	0.5	--	----
Community club.....	37	9.3	12	1.0	21	11.1	4	4.0
Social club.....	25	6.3	9	8.0	11	5.8	5	5.0
Garden and flower clubs.....	4	1.0	--	----	1	0.5	3	3.0
Study clubs, mis- cellaneous.....	9	2.3	--	----	5	2.6	4	4.0
All other ^a	11	2.8	4	3.5	4	2.1	3	3.0

(continued)

TABLE X -- CONTINUED

Organization	Number of women							
	Total		35 to 44 years of age		45 to 54 years of age		55 years of age and over	
	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent
Total number of offices held by women.....	958		306		443		209	
Average number per woman.....	2.39		2.73		2.35		2.09	

^aInclude chautauqua committee, state fair board, township and county fair board, cemetery association, Mutual Insurance Company, and local committee member, Better Homes in America.

homemakers whom she studied devoted to meetings, study, church, and community work during the week they kept their records was 38 minutes, approximately three-fourths of an hour a day, or five hours a week, nearly one-sixth of all the time devoted to leisure pursuits.¹ Another investigator to whom Landis and Willard refer reported that in the course of a year volunteer leaders in four states were giving almost twenty days a year to their work.² It is quite likely that the women studied spent as much if not more time than those reported above. Many of the 400 women stated that they set aside one day every week or every fortnight for club activities.

Age as a Factor in Participation in the Organized Group Life of the Community

In Membership in Organizations

The findings indicated that membership in the extension organization was pretty constant throughout the three age groups. The women aged 55 years and over reported the highest percentage of memberships in the organizations affiliated with the church.

¹Hildegard Kneeland, "Leisure of Homemakers Studied for Light on the Standard of Living," U. S. Department of Agriculture, Yearbook of Agriculture (1932), pp. 562-564.

²Benson Y. Landis and John D. Willard, Rural Adult Education (New York: Macmillan Co., 1933), p. 76.

On the other hand, it was the women under 45 years of age who reported the highest proportion of memberships in the Parent-Teacher Association. This is what would be expected, since it was the women in this age group who had the largest proportion of children of school age. The total number of memberships in other organizations was too small to warrant drawing any conclusions on the basis of age.

In Leadership Responsibilities

An analysis of the preceding table shows that it was the women aged 35 to 44 years who were carrying the heaviest responsibilities as leaders, at least to the extent that numerical averages give evidence. As the women grew older there appeared to be a gradual tapering off of leadership responsibilities. It was in the group aged 35 to 44 years that the largest proportion of leaders of organizations serving youth were found -- the 4-H clubs, the Parent-Teacher Associations, and the Sunday schools. It was this group, too, that listed the largest percentage of leaders in the Ladies' Aid and the Missionary Societies. But it was the women aged 45 to 54 years who contributed the largest proportion of leaders to county and state executive committees, at the meetings of which long-time policies for the promotion of the extension program are formulated.

Formal Education As a Factor

In Membership in Organizations

Formal education apparently was a more important factor than age in determining the extent of a membership in organizations. The average membership per woman for the 200 who had at least graduated from high school (Group B) was 3.59, and that for the 200 with a more limited amount of formal education (Group A) was 3.13. It will be noted that, in addition to participation in the organizations that made a popular appeal, the women in Group B also had affiliations with other organizations as study clubs, patriotic societies, and social clubs in which the membership was more restricted. Four-fifths of the women in Group B attended church every Sunday or every alternate Sunday as compared with not quite three-fourths of the women in Group A.

In Leadership Responsibilities

As a later table shows, the women in Group B were carrying heavier responsibilities as leaders. This was true of the group as a whole and for all but four of the organizations -- the Ladies' Aid, the fraternal associations, the W.C.T.U., and the community clubs. In these organizations the women in Group A had a somewhat higher proportion.

TABLE XI

ORGANIZATIONS TO WHICH WOMEN BELONGED
CLASSIFIED BY FORMAL EDUCATION OF WOMEN

Organization	Number of women					
	Total		Formal education			
			Eighth grade or less		Graduated from high school	
	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent
Total.....	400	100.0	200	100.0	200	100.0
Church organizations:						
Ladies' Aid.....	205	51.2	113	56.5	92	46.0
Missionary societies..	136	34.0	54	27.0	82	41.0
Others.....	22	5.5	13	6.5	9	4.5
Home and school:						
Home economics exten- sion groups.....	360	90.0	174	87.0	186	93.0
Parent-Teacher Associ- ation.....	134	33.5	55	27.5	79	39.5
Women's federated club	21	5.2	8	4.0	13	6.5
Agricultural organi- zations:						
Grange.....	22	5.5	7	3.5	15	7.5
Others.....	32	8.0	16	8.0	16	8.0
Fraternal organizations:						
Eastern Star.....	49	12.2	21	10.5	28	14.0
Daughters of Rebekah..	17	4.2	11	5.5	6	3.0
Others.....	25	6.2	15	7.5	10	5.0
Citizenship and political:						
School board.....	30	7.5	13	6.5	17	8.5
Election board.....	2	0.5	--	----	2	1.0
League of Women Voters	5	1.3	3	1.5	2	1.0
Republican and Demo- cratic Women's Clubs	7	1.8	1	0.5	6	3.0
Welfare organizations...	8	2.0	4	2.0	4	2.0
Women's Christian Tem- perance Union.....	40	10.0	15	7.5	25	12.5
Patriotic societies.....	21	5.3	7	3.5	14	7.0
Community club.....	80	20.0	42	21.0	38	19.0
Social club.....	78	19.5	32	16.0	46	23.0
Garden and flower clubs.	10	2.5	4	2.0	6	3.0
Study club, unclassified	19	4.8	3	1.5	16	8.0
All other.....	21	5.3	14	7.0	7	3.5
Total number of member- ships in organiza- tions.....	1344		625		719	
Average number of mem- berships per woman...	3.36		3.12		3.59	

TABLE XII

ORGANIZATIONS IN WHICH HOMEMAKERS WERE LEADERS OR OFFICERS
CLASSIFIED BY FORMAL EDUCATION OF WOMEN

Organization	Number of women					
	Total		Formal education			
			Eighth grade or less		Graduated from high school	
	Num-ber	Per-cent	Num-ber	Per-cent	Num-ber	Per-cent
Total.....	400	100.0	200	100.0	200	100.0
Church organizations:						
Ladies' Aid.....	81	20.3	52	26.0	29	14.5
Missionary society.....	63	15.8	25	12.5	38	19.0
Sunday school.....	157	39.2	73	36.5	84	42.0
Home and school:						
Home economics extension group						
Community.....	255	63.8	119	59.5	136	68.0
County and/or state..	102	25.5	36	18.0	66	33.0
4-H club.....	78	19.5	35	17.5	43	21.5
Parent-Teacher Association.....	57	14.3	18	9.0	39	19.5
Women's federated clubs	--	----	--	----	--	----
Agricultural organizations:						
Grange.....	--	----	--	----	--	----
Others.....	--	----	--	----	--	----
Fraternal associations...	49	12.3	30	15.0	19	9.5
Citizenship and political	12	3.0	5	2.5	7	3.5
Welfare organizations....	5	1.3	3	1.5	2	1.0
Women's Christian Temperance Union.....	11	2.8	6	3.0	5	2.5
Patriotic societies.....	2	0.5	1	0.5	1	0.5
Community club.....	37	9.3	21	10.5	16	8.0
Social club.....	25	6.3	9	4.5	16	8.0
Garden and flower club...	4	1.0	1	0.5	3	1.5
Study clubs, miscellaneous.....	9	2.3	5	2.5	4	2.0
All other.....	11	2.8	5	2.5	6	3.0
Total number of offices held by women.....	958		444		514	
Average number per woman.....	2.39		2.22		2.57	

READING INTERESTS OF FARM WOMEN

The Group Studied

As was noted in Section III, reading was reported as a leisure-time pursuit by practically every woman in the group. No other activity was so nearly universal. This was to be expected. Reading for pleasure and for profit presumably moves along with literacy, and in a literate population practically everyone may be supposed to read. The question is, what do they read? The advance of literacy has seen not only an increasing volume of reading material but a variety, a range in kinds and qualities, that is a tribute to human ingenuity, if not to human wisdom. It is a question whether our "best" is above the "best" of former days when far less was published, whether the variety is not a variety in the vulgar, the trivial, the superficial.

The phenomenal growth in the number of popularly priced periodicals in recent years is directly associated with the development of large-scale production and the producer's quest for a national market. Newspapers and periodicals are the vehicles through which, by means of national advertising, the public is informed about the large variety of consumers' goods available. Proceeds from the sale of space to advertisers have made it possible for publishers to sell subscriptions to the periodicals at a very moderate price.

A good deal of sales effort has gone into increasing the circulation of these newspapers and magazines in rural as well as urban areas. Hence it was not surprising to discover that newspapers and periodicals were found in practically all of the 400 farm homes studied. An intensive study has been made of the papers and magazines found in the homes of 100 of these women, as well as of the books which they had read during the current year. Fifty of the women were selected from among those whose schooling had not extended beyond the eighth grade, the other half from among those who had attended college. Twenty-nine of the women were under 45 years of age, twenty-six were aged 55 and over, and the

TABLE XIII
FORMAL EDUCATION OF WOMEN
WHOSE READING INTERESTS WERE STUDIED
CLASSIFIED BY AGE

Formal education	Number of women				
	Total		35 to 44 years of age	45 to 54 years of age	55 years of age and over
	Num- ber	Per cent	Number	Number	Number
Total.....	100	100.0	29	45	26
Eighth grade or less.....	50	50.0	10	25	15
Attended college or normal.....	29	29.0	8	15	6
Graduate of college	19	19.0	10	4	5
Advanced degree, college.....	2	2.0	1	1	--

remainder were in the age group between 45 and 54 years. The proportion of women in each age group is the same as in the group of 400. In the group of 400, two-fifths of those who had attended college were college graduates, and this is likewise true of the group of 100. Included in the hundred are women from each of the fourteen states in which the larger group lived. It is believed that the information provided by these 100 women is representative of that furnished by the larger group. The information provided by the women is presented in two sections. The first section consists of an analysis of the newspapers and magazines found in their homes and the second section deals with the books that they had read during the current year and those which they listed as favorites.

Newspapers and Periodicals Received

Newspapers

All but one of the 100 families subscribed for one or more daily papers. Seventy-six received one, 21 received two, and 2

were subscribers to three daily papers.¹ In a number of cases in which the family subscribed for two dailies, one was a local publication and the other was a large metropolitan daily. For example, several Kansas and Missouri women reported that they subscribed for the daily paper published in a nearby small city, and, in addition, they took the Kansas City Star. Amount of formal education apparently was not a factor of any importance in determining the number of daily papers taken by the families, since the average number of dailies per family in each of the two educational groups was approximately the same. On the other hand, age made some difference. More of the "older" families subscribed for two or more dailies so that the average number of papers per family for those aged 55 and over was 1.4, as compared with an average of 1.1 per family for those under 45. This is not surprising, since the older families presumably were enjoying a better income and were leading a less active life and thus had more leisure to devote to reading.

Fifty-eight women reported that their families subscribed for one or more county weeklies. A total of 77 subscriptions were reported, or an average of 1.3 per family taking any. Forty-two subscribed for one, 13 subscribed for two, and 3 for three.

Periodicals for Which the Families Subscribed

These 100 families received a large number and a considerable variety of periodicals. They have been grouped in the table under sixteen different categories. The classification used has been adapted from one made by research workers in the Graduate Library School of the University of Chicago for their use in some investigations they are making of the reading interests of various groups of individuals.

A total of 814 subscriptions were reported by the farm women studied, an average of 8.14 per family. Only one woman said that her family subscribed to no magazines. Of the total number of subscriptions, nearly two-fifths were for "Farm magazines" and one-third were for "Parents' and women's magazines." Four-fifths of the subscriptions reported by the women with a limited amount of schooling, and two-thirds of those reported by the women who had attended college were for magazines in these two categories.

¹The Drover's Journal, a daily publication featuring market information which some of the women included with newspapers has been classified under "Farm Journals."

TABLE XIV
PERIODICALS REPORTED BY 100 WOMEN
CLASSIFIED BY FORMAL EDUCATION

Type of magazine	Subscriptions reported by --					
	Total		50 women ^a		50 women	
			Eighth grade or less		Attended college	
	Num-ber	Per-cent	Num-ber	Per-cent	Num-ber	Per-cent
Total.....	814	100.0	367	100.0	447	100.0
Farm magazines						
Country Gentleman.....	43	5.3	20	5.5	23	5.1
All others.....	277	34.0	136	37.0	141	31.5
Parents' and women's magazines.....	268	32.9	134	36.5	134	29.9
Juvenile.....	35	4.3	8	2.2	27	6.0
Religious.....	46	5.6	13	3.5	33	7.4
News weeklies.....	45	5.5	18	4.9	27	6.0
Miscellaneous 5 cent weeklies.....	19	2.3	9	2.5	10	2.2
Miscellaneous 10 to 25 cent monthlies.....	39	4.8	13	3.5	26	5.8
Quality plus.....	1 ^a	*	1	*	--	----
Travel.....	17	2.1	8	2.2	9	2.0
Sports and outdoor.....	7	0.8	2	0.5	5	1.1
Digests for readers.....	6	0.7	3	0.8	3	0.6
Reviews.....	3	0.3	1	*	2	*
Popular science.....	4	0.5	--	----	4	0.8
Business and finance.....	2 ^b	*	1	*	1	*
Liberal-radical.....	1 ^c	*	--	----	1	*
Health.....	1 ^d	*	--	----	1	*
Average number per family.....	8.14		7.34		8.94	

^aAtlantic Monthly.

^bWorld's Work.

^cOutlook.

^dHygeia.

*Not computed, owing to small number involved.

Ranking third in popularity (if popularity may be judged by number of subscriptions) were magazines and bulletins religious or sectarian in character. "News weeklies" ranked fourth, "Miscellaneous 10 to 25 cent monthlies," fifth, and magazines for children ranked sixth. The 145 remaining subscriptions were for magazines that appear under a variety of classifications. In addition, there were a number of subscriptions to the "house organ" of fraternal associations and clubs of various types, such as the woman's college sorority, the D.A.R., the W.C.T.U., and the General Federation of Women's Clubs.¹

Agricultural journals.--The agricultural journals which were listed by the women included two national agricultural magazines, the weekly or bi-weekly publications known as farm journals, the magazines devoted to some special phase of farming, as dairying, livestock, poultry, vegetable gardening, or fruit, and still others which specialized in some special breed of dairy cows or hogs, as, for example, the Guernsey Breeders' or the Hereford Journal, the National Duroc News, or the Jersey Bulletin. The magazines included under this general heading are essentially the farmers' "trade journals." The subscriptions for magazines in this category totalled 320, or an average of 3.2 per family. The average number of subscriptions per family reported by the 50 women with a limited amount of formal education was 3.12, for those who had attended college the average was 3.28. All but nine of the 100 women reported subscriptions to one or more of these magazines. Sixteen took one, 23 reported two, 27 listed three, and 25 reported four or more. One of the women in the latter group said that they received ten magazines of this character. The Country Gentleman was listed by 43 women, and 65 listed the farm journal published in their own state among those found in their household.

Parents' and women's magazines.--Twenty different titles to periodicals that in the classification referred to above are listed as "Parents' and women's magazines" were included in the lists submitted by the 100 women. At least one of these magazines, The Farmer's Wife, is designed especially for the farm woman. The total number of subscriptions for magazines in this group was 226, or an average of 2.26 per family. All but five of the 100 families took one or more. Twenty-three women reported that they subscribed for one, 37 for two, 20 for three, 8 for four, 5 for five, and 2 women listed six. Fifty-nine women subscribed for The Farmer's Wife, 33 for the Women's Home Companion, and 33 for the Ladies' Home Journal; McCall's Magazine was listed by 30 women and Better Homes and Gardens by 27. Two took Parents'

¹These do not appear in Table XIV.

Magazine and one, Child Welfare, 10 subscribed for Needlecraft and 18 for Good Housekeeping.¹ As would be expected, the older women took a larger number of these magazines. Those under 45 years averaged 2.0 magazines per woman, while those aged 45 and over averaged 2.4. Although the total number of subscriptions for the women in each of the two educational groups was approximately the same, the proportion of subscriptions to women's magazines generally recognized as standard was somewhat higher for the 50 women who had attended college.

Juvenile magazines.--Somewhat less than one in every three women under 45 years of age, and one in every four who were aged 55 or over reported that they took one or more magazines for children. With the latter group, it is probable that in some cases the periodical was taken for a grandchild who lived with her grandparents. In addition, a number mentioned the fact that their children received Sunday-school papers, but since the titles were not given they have not been included here.

Others.--The 100 women listed 24 periodicals that in the usual classification would be considered magazines of general interest, those that are read by families in all occupational groups. Approximately one in every seven families subscribed for the Saturday Evening Post, one in every five for the Literary Digest, and one in every five for Pathfinder. Slightly more than one in every three families subscribed for the American Magazine, one in every six, sixteen in all, subscribed for the National Geographic, and six each for Nature Magazine and Readers' Digest. There were four subscriptions for Collier's, two for Time, Popular Science, and World's Work, and one for each of the following magazines: Liberty, Cosmopolitan, Red Book, Park's Floral, Home Mechanics, Popular Mechanics, Hygeia, Outlook, Atlantic Monthly, Current History, League of Nation News, World-Traveller, and Review of Reviews. In the group as a whole, three-fourths of the families reported subscriptions to one or more of the above periodicals. Three out of every five women with a limited amount of schooling listed one or more of these magazines, whereas one or more were included among those listed by all but four of the women who had attended college.

¹Other periodicals in this group which the women named were Country Home, Delineator, Household, Pictorial Review, Comfort, Garden and Home Builder, Gentlewoman, People's Home Journal, and People's Popular Monthly.

Books

Number of Women Reading Books; Number of Books Read

In addition to the questions on newspapers and periodicals which the family received, the women were asked to list the titles of the books they had read during the year in which they filled out the questionnaire.¹ Books read are in some respects a better criterion of the woman's real reading interests than the periodicals taken, for many of the magazines in the home may represent the preferences of other members of the family and may not even be read by the woman. The replies showed that 14 women had read no books, 2 had read one, 10 two, 14 three, 11 four, and 49 had read five or more.

A total of 450 volumes were read by the 86 women reading any. Two-thirds of these were books of fiction and one-third were non-fiction.² Ten of the 86 women reading books had read no fiction, and 26 women had read fiction only. As would be expected, some of the same books were listed by several different women so that in the 290 volumes of fiction reported there were only 165 different titles.

¹It is conceded that over such a long period memory is apt to be fallible and that for this reason the list of books submitted by many of the women may not be complete. It is conceivable that in other cases books that had been read more than a year previous were included. However, the questionnaire was in the women's hands for a month or more, so there was time for reflection regarding questions about which there was some doubt. There was no implication in the questionnaire that there was virtue in quantity read, and it is believed that the record was not padded.

²It is interesting to note that these proportions are exactly the same as those found for the general pattern of library circulation in a Chicago suburb during the four weeks that records were checked. See Leon Carnovsky, "Community Studies in Reading," The Library Quarterly, January, 1935, pp. 15, 16.

Number of Women Reading Fiction;
Books of Fiction Read

In order to facilitate analysis of the fiction read it was decided to adopt the classification used by students in the Graduate Library School of the University of Chicago in their study of the fiction drawn from public libraries in selected suburbs of Chicago. These investigators classified the books reported under three main categories: "Old classics" (or as Carnovsky has phrased it, "Books by standard authors"), "Modern fiction, good," and "Modern fiction, light." Good books of some age and of permanent interest were placed under "Classics." It was decided that if a book was important enough to be studied formally for its part in a literary or social movement it belonged here.

Because no objective rating scale has yet been devised which may be used as the basis for a qualitative rating, these investigators, in deciding in which category to place the various titles of modern fiction, were guided by the notices appearing in the American Library Association catalogue (better known as the A.L.A. Catalogue), the judgment of reviewers whose opinions were quoted in the Book Review Digest, and the reviews appearing in Book List, a bulletin edited by the staff of the American Library Association. In some cases the complete works of an author were judged bodily as to quality, in other cases it occasionally was found that while his earlier productions were classified as light fiction, later volumes were classified as good in quality. Since the farm women studied had read many of the same books that were read by patrons of the suburban libraries, the matter of deciding in which category most of the titles listed belonged was easily settled. For others, the author consulted the sources mentioned above. As Carnovsky reminds us,

"The classification of fiction according to literary quality is by no means a simple matter. The line from the worst book to the best book is composed of literally infinite gradations. No one would seriously question the superiority of Willa Cather to Temple Bailey, but to establish finer distinctions would involve endless disagreement. Who shall say whether Harold Bell Wright is a poorer writer than Temple Bailey, or whether Pearl Buck is a better writer than Willa Cather? But fortunately for our purposes it was unnecessary to make such distinctions. The classification

of fiction used in the Hinsdale study was threefold and perhaps a bit arbitrary. The classes into which the fiction was divided consisted of:

1. Works of standard authors -- Dickens, Hugo, Hardy, Conrad, et al.
2. Modern, good -- Cather, Buck, Sinclair Lewis, et al.
3. Modern, light -- mystery and detectives, Western, and love stories."¹

This is not the place to consider in detail the qualities that entitle one book to be ranked as "good" fiction while another is ranked as "light." Nor does it seem wise to attempt to enumerate certain criteria that have been set up as guides for the critical reader. But at least one criterion is suggested by the following statement made by a reviewer in commenting on a recently published volume by a popular writer of light fiction.

"Miss ----- [the author] has had a special flair for writing about the contemporary scene in the contemporary style and her work has had the essence of the passing rather than of the eternal scene of human action and conflict."

Another critic, in referring to a prolific writer of fiction generally recognized as "light" in quality, refers to the commonplace, amateurish way in which he develops his plots and his predilection for melodrama, and says of his style that it is quite lacking in distinction.

It was not surprising to find that the women read more than twice as many volumes of "light modern" fiction as of "good modern" fiction, nor was it surprising to find that these women had read only eleven volumes of "Old Classics." This tendency has been noted by other investigators and has been commented on freely by literary critics.

Among the books of good fiction listed were the productions of such writers as Bess Streeter Aldrich, Margaret Ayer Barnes, Katherine M. Brown, George W. Cable, Willa Cather, Ralph Connor, Mazo De La Roche, Edna Ferber, Dorothy Canfield Fisher, Emerson Hough, Sinclair Lewis, Martha Ostenso, Thomas Nelson Page, J. B. Priestley, Elizabeth Madox Roberts, Ole. E. Rolvaag, Sigrid Unset, Hugh Walpole, and Thornton Wilder; while the old classics listed were written by Cooper, Dickens, Eliot, Hawthorne, Bulwer-Lytton, Poe, Jane Austen, and Tolstoy.

¹
Op. cit., pp. 16, 17.

TABLE XV

NUMBER OF WOMEN READING VARIOUS TYPES OF FICTION
CLASSIFIED BY FORMAL EDUCATION

Type of fiction	Number of women					
	Total		Eighth grade or less		Attended college	
	Num-ber	Per cent	Num-ber	Per cent	Num-ber	Per cent
Total number of women..	76	100.0	37	100.0	39	100.0
Works of standard authors.....	9	11.8	5	13.5	4	10.2
Good modern.....	62	81.5	29	78.3	33	84.6
Light modern.....	66	86.8	36	97.3	30	76.9

TABLE XVI

TYPES OF FICTION READ
CLASSIFIED BY FORMAL EDUCATION OF READERS

Type of fiction	Number of books read by --					
	All women (76)		Formal education			
			Eighth grade or less (37 women)		Attended college (39 women)	
	Num-ber	Per cent	Num-ber	Per cent	Num-ber	Per cent
Total number of volumes.....	290	100.0	146	100.0	144	100.0
Works of standard authors.....	11	3.8	6	4.1	5	3.5
Good modern.....	88	30.3	34	23.3	54	37.5
Light modern.....	191	65.9	106	72.6	85	59.0

In the preliminary analysis of the data submitted by the women, the titles of books by three writers of light fiction -- Gene Stratton Porter, Harold Bell Wright, and Zane Grey -- appeared so frequently that it was decided to make this the subject of a special analysis. Of the 191 books of light fiction which were listed by the 76 women reading any fiction, two-fifths (76 volumes) were written by these three authors. Volumes by them were reported by 37 women. Other light-fiction writers whose productions were mentioned frequently were Temple Bailey, Kathleen Norris, Eleanor Porter, Grace Richmond, and James Oliver Curwood. It is probable that the women had read many of these books when they appeared as serials in the popular magazines.

Number of Women Reading Books
Other Than Fiction; Books Read

As shown in the tables, sixty women had read a total of 160 books of non-fiction. The number of women reading books in the category of non-fiction and the number of books read appear in the tables under nine categories. The classification used is one that was adapted from the Dewey decimal system by research workers in the Graduate Library School of the University of Chicago and has been used by them in studies of reading habits of residents of Chicago and nearby suburbs. In this classification books of literary criticism, drama, essays, poetry, all non-fictional humorous writings, and non-technical books about literature are included under the general category of "Literature." Because information was desired concerning the reading of books that dealt with current social issues, books in the field of political science and economics were put in a special category. "Occupational reading" was added because the investigators were especially interested to know to what extent people read books dealing with their everyday problems. Books in such fields as child development, health, parent education, home furnishing, and nutrition which the farm women reported were placed in this category. Other categories included in the classification but not listed in the tables, because the farm women included no books in these fields, were "Physical sciences" and "Reference books." "Nature study" was added by the author because of special interest in securing information regarding books on this subject which the women reported.

It is apparent that four fields dominated the non-fiction reading of these women. Books in the "Religion, character education, philosophy, psychology, and education" group were most popular, with "Literature," "Biography and Letters," and "Occupational reading" following in the order named. Together they account for

TABLE XVII

NUMBER OF WOMEN READING VARIOUS TYPES OF NON-FICTION
CLASSIFIED BY FORMAL EDUCATION

Type of non-fiction	Number of women reading --					
	Total		Eighth grade or less		Attended college	
	Num-ber	Per-cent	Num-ber	Per-cent	Num-ber	Per-cent
Total number of women.	60	100.0	27	100.0	33	100.0
Religion, character education, philosophy, psychology, and education.....	30	50.0	11	40.7	19	57.5
Biography and letters...	21	35.0	9	33.3	12	36.0
Literature.....	19	31.6	8	29.6	11	33.3
Travel and exploration..	14	23.3	4	14.8	10	30.3
Occupational reading....	11	18.3	2	7.4	9	27.2
History.....	8	13.3	3	11.1	5	15.1
Political science, government, economics, current social issues.	8	13.3	2	7.4	6	18.1
Nature study.....	1	1.6	1	3.7	--	----
Social sciences (anthropology and sociology).	1	1.6	--	----	1	3.3

more than three-fourths of the books of non-fiction read. Exclusive of the Bible, 46 books in the first category were reported by 30 women. Barton's The Man Nobody Knows was mentioned by three, and Jones's Christ at the Round Table by two. The titles of a number of the books suggested that they might have come down from a much earlier era, while those of four or five others implied that they were concerned with expounding sectarian doctrines. In addition to the religious books, there were two books in the field of character education, three in philosophy, and one in psychology.

The books included under the general category of "Literature" vary greatly in quality. Twenty were classified as poetry, six as drama, three as essays, and one as humor. Edgar Guest was the author of six of the volumes of poetry mentioned, six volumes were collections of poems, and there was one volume by each of the following authors: Longfellow, Lowell, Poe, Tennyson, Whitman, Robinson, Amy Lowell, and Millay. Three plays by Shakespeare, Millay's The King's Henchman, Sheriff's Journey's End, and

TABLE XVIII

TYPES OF NON-FICTION READ
CLASSIFIED BY FORMAL EDUCATION OF READERS

Type of non-fiction	Number of books read by --					
	All women (60)		Eighth grade or less (27 women)		Attended college (33 women)	
	Num-ber	Per-cent	Num-ber	Per-cent	Num-ber	Per-cent
Total number of books.	160	100.0	53	100.0	107	100.0
Religion, character education, philosophy, psychology, and education.....	46	28.7	16	30.2	30	28.0
Literature.....	30	18.7	11	20.7	19	17.7
Biography and letters....	29	18.1	12	22.6	17	15.8
Occupational reading.....	21	13.1	3	5.6	18	16.7
Travel and exploration...	14	8.7	4	7.5	10	9.3
History.....	9	5.6	4	7.5	5	4.7
Political science, government, economics, current social issues..	9	5.6	2	3.7	7	6.5
Nature study.....	1	*	1	1.8	--	----
Social sciences, anthropology, sociology.....	1	*	--	----	1	*

*Less than one per cent.

Disraeli comprised the drama, and there were no books of literary criticism. Thirty-four other books were included in the other five classes of non-fiction listed and they were reported by 18 women. They included Beard's American Government and Politics and his Rise of American Civilization, Sullivan's Our Times, Bullard's American Diplomacy, and Wells' Outline of History. The volumes of travel and exploration included Lindbergh's We, Norman Hall's Mid-Pacific, Halliburton's books, and Lawrence's Revolt in the Desert.

Formal Education As a Factor

It is generally assumed that amount of formal education is an important element in determining the character of the reading interests of adults.¹ To what extent was this apparent in

¹Douglas Waples and Ralph Tyler, What People Want to

books read by the women studied? Only five of the 50 women who had attended college had read no books during the current year as compared with nine of those with a limited amount of formal education. Approximately three-fourths of the women in each group had read one or more books of fiction and they had read approximately the same number of volumes. However, more of the women who had attended college had read books classified as "Modern fiction, good" and, conversely, fewer of them had read books classified as "Modern fiction, light." For example, the women who had attended college had read only one-third of the 76 books written by Grey, Wright, and Porter. These 27 volumes were reported by 15 women in the group, while 22 of the women with a limited amount of schooling had read 49 books by these authors. But in no case do the figures on the various types of fiction for the two educational groups vary as much as might have been expected. The number of women with a limited amount of schooling who had read books written by standard authors (two in all), and those in that category which were read by the women with more schooling (a total of 9 volumes) was too small to warrant drawing any conclusions. Besides education, investigators are of the opinion that differences in sex and occupation account for differences in reading interests. Since the group studied was made up of individuals of one sex and in the same occupation, it might be expected that their reading interests would be similar.

It was in the field of non-fiction that education apparently was of more significance. More of the women who had attended college had read books classified in this general category and this was true, likewise, for each of the nine types of non-fiction listed. Twice as many volumes of non-fiction were read by the women with a greater amount of formal education. This group had read nearly twice as many volumes classified under "Religion, character education, philosophy, psychology, and education," and six times as many books classified as "Occupational reading." In some of the categories the total number of books read by both groups was too small to make the differences very significant, but in the aggregate the difference is quite marked. This is not surprising since comprehension of many of the books of non-fiction mentioned by the women is dependent on a richer educational background than the woman with a limited amount of schooling had had.

Read About (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1931), pp. 14, 146, 189. See also Rhey Boyd Parsons, "A Study of Adult Reading." (Unpublished Master's thesis, Department of Education, University of Chicago, 1923, p. 73.)

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This final chapter is concerned with some of the more important findings of the study, the conclusions arrived at, and the problems suggested by a consideration of the leisure-time activities of farm women.

The Findings of the Study

The Selected Character of the Group

As the evidence has shown, the 400 women whose leisure interests and activities have been studied were a highly selected group, selected as to age, economic status, and extent of formal education, and because they possessed certain personal qualifications and conformed to certain standards which met with the approval of their neighbors.

They lived in the most favored agricultural area in the United States. The soil in this region is highly productive, and its fertility has been conserved through the application of the best practices known to agricultural science. Until quite recently it has been farmed largely by owners, many of whom are the descendants of a hardy agricultural stock. In many cases the same family has occupied the land for several generations. Modern methods of communication are available to a goodly proportion of the families living in this section, and a large majority live in relatively close proximity to central markets.

All of the women in the group studied lived in counties having an agricultural agent and more than two-thirds of the counties had a home demonstration agent. As would be expected, much of the organized group life in which these women participated (other than that under the auspices of the church) centered around activities sponsored by these agents.

It should not be inferred that all farm women in the United States are as fortunately situated. Many of them are living in regions far less productive agriculturally. Their homes are situated in isolated communities that are remote from markets, almost wholly lacking in modern methods of communication, and with little or no trained leadership. Other communities, more fortunate as to their physical environment, have little in the way of organized group life because here, too, trained leadership for adults is lacking.

All of these 400 women had some leisure. If the definition given in the introductory chapter is accepted, that leisure for homemakers is "the surplus of time over and above that which they consider it necessary to devote to their daily tasks," it is probable that these women had more leisure than most farm women in the United States. It is probable, too, that they had more leisure than most of the farm women in the North Central states. A computation of the total amount of leisure time reported by the 400 women yielded results very similar to those obtained from records kept by the farm women who cooperated with the Bureau of Home Economics in its study of the length of the homemaker's working day. But as noted above, both of these groups were highly selected.¹ In a representative sample there would be a much larger proportion of younger women and a much larger percentage of families with young children. A representative sample would reveal that the formal education of a much larger proportion of the women had not extended beyond the eighth grade. A much greater percentage of homes would be found lacking in modern facilities and in leisure-time equipment. A more representative sample doubtless would reveal, also, that many farm families in the United States had but slight appreciation of the value of leisure and little or nothing in their traditions, habits, or customs to guide them in their choice of avocations.

Leisure Activities of the Group

The leisure pattern which this group presented showed great uniformity. This is not surprising since, in spite of variations in the economic and social status of the various occupational groups, the life pattern of all homemakers is very similar. Especially would one expect to find that the activities which occupied the leisure time of this selected group of farm women would be similar. Certain specifications were set up for the participants in the project of which these questionnaires were a part, hence the women who filled them out were obviously those who in some degree met the specifications. The significant thing is that since these women were among farm women a privileged class, since their habits and attitudes were socially approved, since they were the leaders in their community, their leisure pattern represents that toward which others will move as they have opportunity and come into contact with this "culture group."

¹The women who cooperated with the Bureau of Home Economics in its study also represented a selected group. Only those with more than average intelligence would have been capable of keeping the careful records required of the cooperators in this study.

Gardening, reading, visiting with the family and with friends, playing indoor games, singing and playing, entertaining and being entertained, listening to the radio, participating in activities connected with the church and the extension service, these were the pursuits which practically all of the women reported. On the other hand, such activities as special nature study, studying, sewing, needlework and handicrafts, playing the piano, going to the movies, picnicking, automobile riding, and going to the movies, activities connected with the Parent-Teacher Associations, lodges, study clubs, social clubs, and other organizations were reported by a much smaller proportion of the group. There is no doubt but that the women in this selected group spent much more of their leisure in activities connected with organizations than is spent by many farm women in the United States. As was indicated in Chapter VII, only one-eighth of the farm women in the United States were members of home economics extension groups,¹ while all but 10 per cent of the women in the group studied were members.

It is interesting to note that, except for their subscriptions to popular magazines, commercial interests played a minor rôle in determining the uses to which these women put their leisure time, and that the activities they reported most frequently involved little or no expenditure of money. The extent to which this is true of all farm families is indicated from a study made by Kirkpatrick.² In a study of the living expenditures of 2886 farm families in the United States he found that the average amount expended annually for recreation was \$22.50 per family. This was only \$1.90 less than the average amount spent by 1439

¹See p. 135 of the complete dissertation, which is in the University of Chicago Libraries. This is based on the assumption that all of the 760,000 women members of home economics extension groups are farm women. In reality, a considerable number of these members live in small towns and villages. This is especially true in New England and in some of the Middle Atlantic states.

It would be interesting to know something of the economic and educational level of the farm women who are participating actively in the extension program. What proportion of the members are the wives of tenant farmers? What proportion are the wives of owners? Is the educational level of the members above the average for farm women generally? Or is there some evidence of stratification here as elsewhere in society?

²E. L. Kirkpatrick. The Farmer's Standard of Living, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Department bulletin 1466 (November, 1926), p. 25.

families in the North Central states.¹ Factors other than a limited money income which may be responsible for the limited use made by farm families of commercial facilities for the use of leisure are the nature of their job, which precludes long absence from home, and a philosophy that looks with disfavor on expenditures not strictly "useful" in character.

Traditionally, the leisure interests and activities of farm women are very closely bound up with those of their husbands and children. It was apparent that this was likewise true of the group studied. But it was evident, too, that many of the organized activities to which these women referred were carried on with other women and often with women living in different communities in the county. This is indicative of a trend noted in rural communities towards the development of organized activities on the basis of age and sex and special interests.²

The Effect of Age and Formal Education

Age.--Of the activities individual in character reported by the women it was noted that those of a more sedentary nature, such as sewing, handcrafts, and letter writing, were reported by a larger proportion of the women aged 55 and over, while walking and nature study were reported more frequently by the women under 45 years, and piano playing was mentioned more frequently by those under 55 years. Reading aloud, singing and playing, playing indoor games, auto riding, and going to town were mentioned by a larger proportion of younger women, while entertaining and being entertained were reported by a larger proportion of older women. It was the older women, too, who reported a somewhat higher proportion of memberships in organizations affiliated with the church. With this group of farm women, age made no difference, apparently, in membership in the extension organization; but it was the women under 45 who were carrying the heaviest responsibilities as leaders in community groups, and the women aged 45 to 54 who had the heaviest responsibilities as leaders on county and state executive committees.

Formal education.--Age was of less significance than schooling in determining the extent of participation in all types of organizations. It was noted that, in addition to active

¹These amounts did not include expenditure for newspapers and magazines, nor for the automobile.

²For a discussion of this trend, particularly as it relates to special interest groups, see J. H. Kolb, Trends of Country Neighborhoods, University of Wisconsin, Agricultural Experiment Station, Research bulletin 120 (Madison, 1933), p. 22.

participation in the program of the dominant rural organizations, a number of the women who had at least graduated from high school were also members of clubs of various types in nearby urban centers. The women in this group were carrying more responsibilities as leaders than were the women with a limited amount of schooling. The 50 women who had attended college reported subscriptions to a higher proportion of women's magazines that are generally known as standard, and they also listed subscriptions to a higher proportion of periodicals of general interest. They read more books of "good" fiction than did the women with a limited amount of schooling, and they read more books of non-fiction. However, the reading of books occupied a relatively minor place in the leisure program presented by the women, and it was evident that little critical judgment was used in selecting the books to be read.¹ One wonders what the findings would have been if the group had been more representative of farm women in the general population.

Conclusions from the Study; Problems to be Considered

It will be noted that certain leisure-time interests had a very minor place in the pattern presented by the women. Thus there were few references to active participation in such musical activities as choruses, orchestras, and quartettes, only a small proportion of the group had taken part in dramatics, and a comparatively small percentage indicated that they were students of nature. There were few references to outdoor games and sports, and only one woman spoke of visiting an art museum. It is probable that for the majority of farm women certain of these interests will never have a very prominent place in their leisure program. The extent to which they will be incorporated will depend in a large degree upon the availability of leaders in these fields and the development of certain community facilities.

Even with these omissions it is evident that the greater majority of the women in the group studied indulged in a wide variety of leisure pursuits. Changes that might be suggested to a group of this character are largely qualitative in character. The study suggests the need for more discrimination in the choice of magazines, more emphasis on the reading of fiction of the type that will not only provide a means of "escape" but which will also "enrich the quality of living by extending, deepening, refining, and co-ordinating experience." It suggests the importance

¹A few individuals, however, gave evidence of real discrimination in their choices.

of emphasizing the reading of books other than fiction. It would seem especially desirable for farm women to read books that would give them some understanding of such current economic and social problems as taxation, the tariff, the cooperative movement, roads, and schools, all matters on which rural people generally need to be informed.

Although the findings of the study throw little light on the type of songs chosen for family or group singing, or the games played in the family group, it doubtless is true that here, too, there is opportunity to raise the general level of taste. What about home handcrafts? Although it is true that some farm women make articles of real beauty, well-adapted to their purpose, simple and effective in design, and evincing excellent standards of workmanship, many others, with little or no critical judgment in this field, spend their time on articles of little utility and quite lacking in artistic qualities.

What about the qualitative level of the "visiting" carried on in the family group? In the farm home may it not easily happen that so much time and attention will be given to discussions centering around the work of the farm and the home that other interests receive little or no consideration? Similar questions might be raised about practically every activity listed by the women or by any group whose leisure activities were being studied.

Although in this study major attention has been given to the leisure-time interests and activities of a selected group of farm women, our real concern is with the problem of leisure for all farm homemakers, for all farm families. A program designed to increase the possible range and improve the quality of the leisure-time interests and activities of farm women generally needs to be considered from two aspects -- that of needed improvement in the facilities available in the farm homes and in the rural communities, and that of desired changes in the farm family's attitude toward leisure. The facilities needed in the homes include a modern plumbing system, central heating (where climatic conditions make this desirable), and central lighting. The presence of these facilities reduces the time required for "daily, practical tasks" or at least insures that these tasks can be performed with greater satisfaction and less fatigue. Other facilities needed in all farm homes if a satisfactory leisure-time program is to be evolved include some current reading matter, a few good reference books, games that challenge the interest of adults as well as children, and for the families that enjoy music some kind of a musical instrument. All of this of course presupposes a cash income that will make it possible to provide these facilities.

Even with an income much better than that which the average farm family in this country has ever enjoyed, there are certain facilities besides the school which must be provided by the community if the average farm family is to have access to them. Of primary importance is a library system designed especially to meet the needs of rural people and supported by a taxing unit of sufficient size to insure an adequate supply of books that are readily accessible and the services of trained librarians. Cities have long recognized that the only way to insure that books and magazines will be available to all is through cooperative ownership, but the idea that farm people are entitled to similar service has only recently been perceived.

Another facility that is greatly needed in rural communities is a recreation center where meetings may be held, community meals may be prepared, dramatic performances may be given, and various types of games and sports may be enjoyed. As suggested in an earlier chapter, the consolidated school may well form the nucleus of such a center.

There is great need for improved roads for farm families, ¹ who do not live on the main arteries. As was indicated earlier, a large number of farm families in the United States are thus situated, and hence they frequently are unable to participate in the life of the community.

The second part of a suggested program for raising the level of living and improving the range and quality of leisure-time interests and activities of farm women (and incidentally of farm families) is concerned with a discussion of desired changes in the attitude of farm women toward leisure. ² Perhaps one of the best ways to bring about this change in attitude is to acquire some challenging leisure interests that require some time for their fulfillment. As one writer has expressed it, "A conscious motive for the use of more leisure time is the greatest incentive to so organizing one's task that more leisure is available." But in order that this may be a reality, it will be necessary first of all for the women to develop a new philosophy of leisure, to learn to think of leisure time as something desirable in and of itself. As suggested in Chapter V, individuals who have been brought up to believe that work is all-important justify the use

¹Footnote, p. 21.

²At the outset it should be stated that there are no evidences to indicate that farm women will be confronted with the problem of excessive leisure. Their problem is rather that of consolidating the gains they have made and increasing their margin of free time.

of time in leisure pursuits only if it is spent in activities that serve some "useful" purpose, or if the activities so refresh them that as a result they can work more effectively.

Although in these pages our major concern has been with the leisure interests of farm women, it is important to see the problem in its setting, to see it as a part of a larger whole, that of the woman's life. It is that which is the real unit. The problem is not one for farm women only. Farmers, likewise, need to develop this "newer" philosophy, they need to learn to value leisure not merely because it will make them more efficient producers but because it will make it possible for them to widen the range of their interests and appreciations and enable them to have more joy in living.

The problem of developing a philosophy of leisure among rural people is of course only a part of a larger problem, that of developing a philosophy that seeks greater leisure as a desirable goal for all groups in society, at the same time recognizing that leisure is merely opportunity, that it is not an end in itself. Its value both for the individual and for society depends upon the use to which it is put.

